

PAPER TOWELS VS AIR DRYERS



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

'CAMOUFLAGED' SUPERBUGS



PAGE 4

MADDOCKS AWARDS



PAGE 20

AND MUCH, MUCH MORE.....

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CONTENTS

EHPA Contact Directory	3
'Camouflaged' Superbugs	4
Paper Towels or Air Band Dryers	6
EMSIG News	10
Strawberry Tampering Incident Report	11
MSIA Testimonial	12
New Secretary for Southern & Eastern COP	15
Food Forum 2019	16
Maribyrnong City Council Award	19
MADDOCKS AWARDS	20
Perth Restaurant Fined \$13k	21
Vermin Invasion	22
Possums in The Water Tank	24
Feeling queasy?	25
Megan Lee: Takeaway bosses jailed over allergy death	26
UPDATE - Megan Lee: conviction quashed	28

Upcoming Events

Mark Your Diary Now!

Emergency Management for Public Health Professionals Course 22 – 25 July 2019 Victorian Emergency Management Institute (VEMI) Mount Macedon

Public Health & Wellbeing SIG Forum 15 August, 2019 The Angliss Conference Centre, Melbourne

EHPA National Symposium, 24 -25 October, 2019 Windsor Hotel, Melbourne

For more events --> [EHPA Event Calendar](#) <--

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SIGs and Communities of Practice are run frequently and are a fantastic resource for keeping abreast of interesting issues. Contact Bernadet to make sure you don't miss the next one.

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'Camouflaged' Superbugs are fooling our immune cells

Superbugs are going to extreme lengths to hide from our immune system. Photo: Getty

Scientists have discovered that some bacteria are going incognito to trick the immune system and evade detection, creating life-threatening conditions for the infected.

Without effective treatment, these bandits-turned-masters of disguise are capable of spreading fatal infections in the heart valve, urinary tract or in the bloodstream.

The *E. faecalis* bacteria lives in the digestive tract and is generally harmless in healthy people. But, the germ can turn deadly when the immune system is compromised.

People who use antibiotics, hospital patients, the elderly and those with chronic health conditions are most at risk.

The bacteria is one of the so-called superbugs, which are dangerously becoming resistant to antibiotics.

The University of Sheffield sleuths, who released their findings on Friday, summed up the superbug's modus operandi to *The New Daily*: "The bacteria is able to change its own cell surface in order to become undetectable to our immune systems, which allows it to then spread infection," the authors explained.

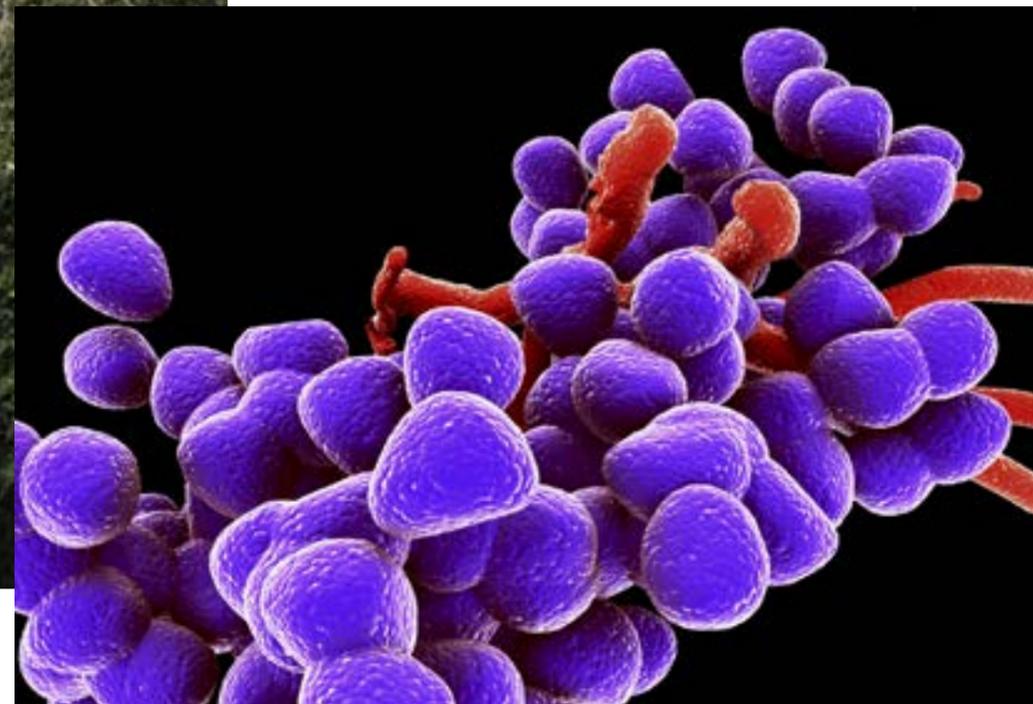
"Unmodified, our immune system detects and engulfs bacteria. But because it can modify its cell wall it is able to hide."

'Opportunistic' and highly resistant to antibiotics Study lead Dr Stéphane Mesnage said the *E. faecalis* bacteria was an "opportunistic pathogen" fast-becoming resistant to the "last resort antibiotic" known as vancomycin.

Traditionally, if you caught this bug you might be treated with an antibiotic such as penicillin. However, this is no longer effective in many cases.

As a superbug, *E. faecalis* can now out-compete healthy bacteria in an infected person's gut to cause an infection.

"The term 'superbug' doesn't necessarily mean it cannot be treated by antibiotics and death or amputation is imminent," ANU professor Frank Bowden wrote in *The Conversation*.



A computer-generated illustration of the culprit, *E. faecalis*. Photo: Getty

"But it does mean most of our commonly used antibiotics will be ineffective. We're forced to resort to antibiotics that are rarely used due to high cost, toxicity, and harmful side effects." But there is an upside: it is hoped the recent finding could pave the way for a new class of treatments to treat bacterial infections.

Drug-resistance reaching dangerous levels Antibiotic resistance is a serious threat to global public health, and has escalated to dangerous levels, the World Health Organisation has warned.

Some of the most difficult to treat infections now include septicaemia, gonorrhoea, urinary tract infections, abdominal infections, skin infections and bacterial pneumonia.

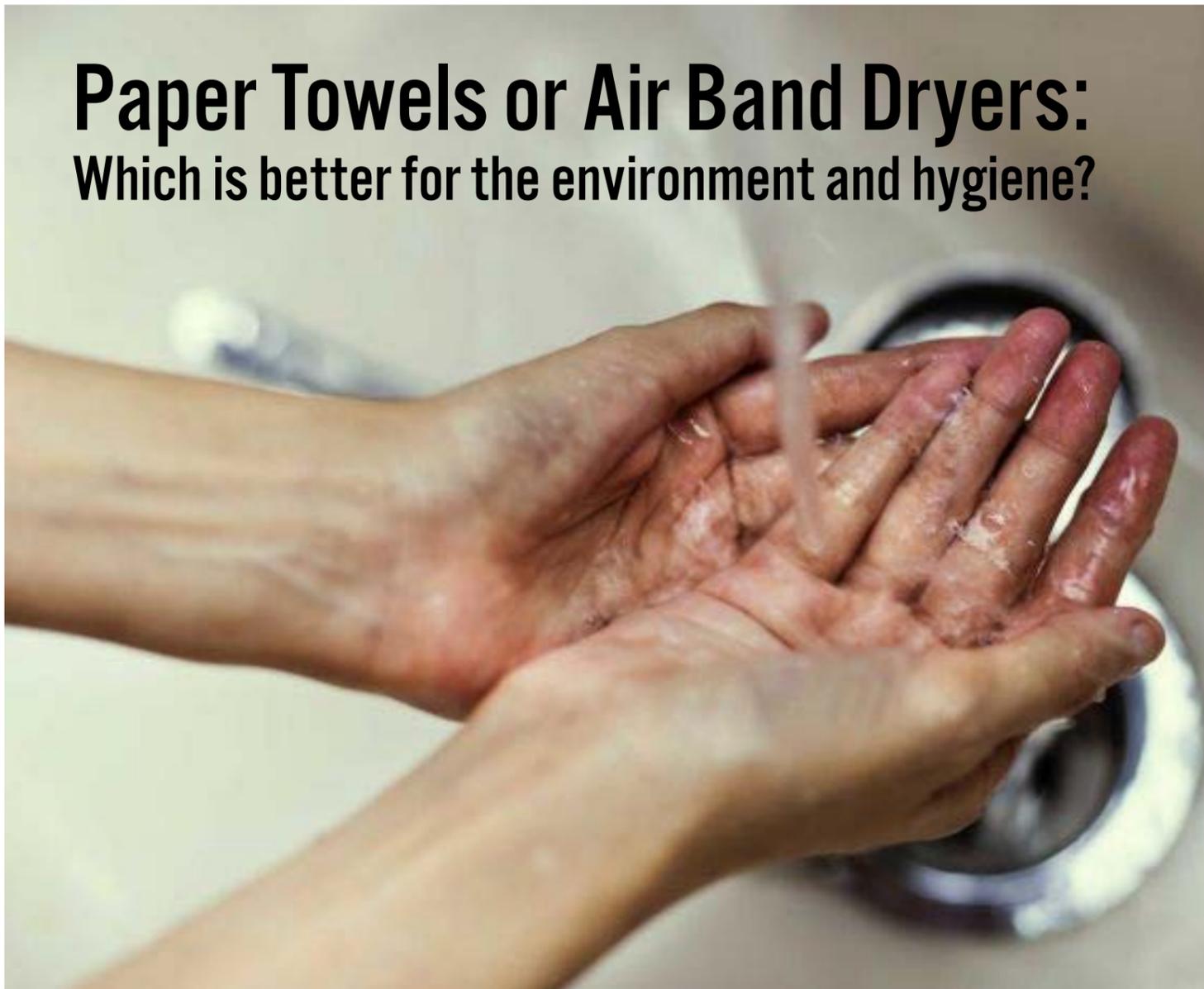
Overuse and misuse of antibiotics is contributing to the drug-resistance problem, NPS MedicineWise says.

NPS MedicineWise recommends that people take the following steps to reduce antibiotic resistance:

- Don't request antibiotics for viruses, such as colds or flu, as they only apply to bacterial infections
- Only take antibiotics as prescribed
- Prevent the spread of germs in the first place by being extra vigilant about hand hygiene
- Don't keep leftover antibiotics
- Don't share antibiotics with anyone else

This article was written by Mahsa Fratantoni and first appeared on [The New Daily](#) May 2, 2019

Paper Towels or Air Band Dryers: Which is better for the environment and hygiene?



Waving your hands under water, without soap, then sticking them under a dryer is a 'sure-fire way' to spread bacteria. (Unsplash: rawpixel)

By science reporter Belinda Smith for Life Matters

Hand washing.

Given a choice, what do you use: a paper towel or an electric hand dryer? Or do you wipe your hands on your jeans and walk out the door?

The paper-towel-vs-hand-dryer debate makes headlines whenever a study comes out in favour of one or the other.

Look at who doles out the money for these studies, though, and you'll see it's usually the "winning" side.

Still, universities and research institutions do (hopefully) conduct the research independently, even if they receive industry funding. So let's take a look at what they say.

Which is better for the environment?

First, let's look at paper towels. Those made from recycled paper are better for the environment than those made from virgin materials, but it can be hard to know if the paper towel you use to blot the water off your hands had a previous life.

Even though paper towels can be made from recycled paper, they can't be recycled.

This is partly because they're treated with chemicals to make them sturdy enough to absorb

Simon Lockrey, a sustainability researcher at RMIT University in Melbourne, said in a traditional hand dryer, a fan blows air across a heating element and onto your hands, evaporating water.



It looks innocuous, but methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) can cause deadly infection. (Wikimedia Commons)

"That's why they're hot," said Mr Lockrey, who used to work for hand dryer manufacturer Dyson but not with hand dryers.

"But it's a very inefficient way of taking water off your hands."

Depending on the model, one push of a warm air hand dryer button will produce emissions of around 20 to 80 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Jet air dryers, on the other hand, aren't hot.

water without falling to bits, but also because there's only so many times paper can be recycled before the cellulose fibres that make up the paper are too short to be woven into new products.

Some paper towels do get composted, but the majority end up in the bin. In the US, around 6 million

tonnes of paper towels end up in landfill each year.

That said, the act of using paper towels doesn't require electricity, unless they're in an automatic dispenser, whereas warm air and jet hand dryers do.

Hand drying options

While the manufacturing process produces greenhouse emissions, around 98 per cent of the global warming potential of an electric hand dryer comes from the energy it uses once installed.

They work by creating a squeegee effect that whisks the water off your skin. That's why you dip your hands in and out of the air stream.

One of the benefits of this new generation of hand dryers is their energy efficiency. They don't have to heat an element and tend to dry hands faster than a traditional hand dryer, Mr Lockrey said.

Many of these studies are funded by manufacturers, like [research published by MIT in 2013](#), which was commissioned and funded by Dyson.

"But even if you compare the environmental effect of a jet hand dryer with say, one-and-a-half predominantly recycled paper towels or a warm hand dryer, [the jet dryer] wins, hands down, even if it uses electricity from a coal power plant."

What's the most hygienic choice?

Hand dryers are designed to dry hands: not save the environment. But there are other issues in bathrooms, such as hygiene.

Continued next page →

Paper Towels or Air Hand Dryers: (Con't)

Paper towels easily stop nasties spreading: just wipe and drop them in the bin.

Jet hand dryers, not so much.

Sure, they might quickly sweep the water off your hands, but in doing so, can also blast off any lingering microbes that dodged the hand washing process into the air, said Mark Wilcox, a medical microbiologist at the University of Leeds.

"There are bugs even on well-washed hands, but poorly washed hands have lots of bugs," Professor Wilcox said.

"They're splattered onto surfaces, into the air, onto you, onto people waiting behind you to use the dryer."

The worst, he added, is when someone waves their hands under running water for a second or two, then goes to dry them.

"That's a sure-fire way of liberating whatever bugs were on your hands before you went to the toilet and any you acquired."

Warm hand dryers might encourage microbes to grow because they provide a nice, toasty environment.

MRSA

It looks innocuous, but methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) can cause deadly infection. (Wikimedia Commons) Professor Wilcox was part of a group, funded by the European Tissue Symposium, that compared microbial levels on surfaces and in the air of hospital bathrooms in the UK, France and Italy with paper towels or a jet air dryer.

Reporting in the [Journal of Hospital Infection](#), they found that paper towels didn't provide a completely sterile environment; they still detected potentially deadly bugs such as MRSA, or methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus.

But when jet hand dryers were used, MRSA popped up three times more often in the



Decisions, decisions ... (Getty Images: Claire Jackson / EyeEm)

UK hospital, and total bacterial levels on the dryers were up to 30 times higher across all the sites compared to bacteria on paper towel dispensers.

"From an infection prevention point of view, it goes against the grain to spread bugs around when there's an alternative that doesn't spread them around anywhere near as much," Professor Wilcox said.

"Warm air hand dryers fall somewhere between the two.

"Even if we get everybody being much better about hand hygiene, there will always be people who don't care, haven't got time, don't understand or whatever."

Most of the time, he added, you might be able to get away uninfected, even if you are contaminated with someone else's germs in the bathroom.

"But if someone has left a soggy, bug-contaminated bit of the towel dangling there, you've got to pull the towel down yourself, potentially contaminating yourself in the act."

"But if those bugs are the flu or norovirus, then they could well matter."

So ... what's best? And what else is there?

Paper towels and electric hand dryers aren't the only options. For instance, continuous cotton towel dispensers fall between the two, environmentally.

About 40 per cent of the carbon dioxide equivalent produced in their lifetime is in materials, manufacturing and transportation.

Cotton isn't the most sustainable crop, and the towels need laundering.

What about hygiene?

"Providing you pull the cloth towel down using a clean part, I'd have little reservation about that," Professor Wilcox said.

"But if someone has left a soggy, bug-contaminated bit of the towel dangling there, you've got to pull the towel down yourself, potentially contaminating yourself in the act."

Out of paper towels and air hand dryers, what's "best" depends on context.

A drawback to jet air dryers is they can be quite loud. Some hover around 90 decibels. That's about as loud as a lawnmower.

"I think some of those brands have really struggled with this, particularly in public spaces," Mr Lockrey said.

"It isn't necessarily appropriate to put them in bathrooms in libraries or offices."

The UK National Health Service recommends that jet hand dryers not be used in clinical settings for this very reason.

Professor Wilcox's hand drying method of choice is a paper towel, but he will use an electric air dryer if it is the only option.

"Bugs can be transferred from your hands to other surfaces much more easily if your hands are wet or damp.

"So it's better to use a jet air dryer than not dry your hands at all."

This article was written by Belinda Smith and first appeared on [Life Matters](#)

EHPA Tamper Evident Tape



Can be used for food sampling or sealing off an area or a fridge etc.

<http://ehpa.org.au/shop/>

ONLY
\$29.50
per roll



Emergency Management Course for Public Health Professionals

Following the relinquishment of the Registered Training Organisation authority, the EMSIG has recently undertaken a full review of EHPA's Emergency Management Course for Public Health Professionals. The review included the revision of the location, duration, content, structure and assessments and comprised of a survey of Environmental Health Managers in December 2018.

The main themes from the Managers survey that have been added into the existing content for the upcoming course include an increased focus on:

- Secondary Impact Assessments
- Technical aspects of the role of an EHO emergency including clean-up, food safety, wastewater and solid waste
- Water quality assessment and monitoring (including water tanks)
- Recent case studies of emergency incidents
- Focus on emerging topics such as consequence management, resilience building and self-care.

Based on this feedback the course will be an all-inclusive four-day course from 22 July to 25 July and returns to Mt Macedon at the Victorian Emergency Management Institute.

Registration information for the course will be sent out in the coming weeks.

Council's in Emergencies Project- Phase 2

The project is currently in Phase Two which will evaluate councils' emergency management capability and capacity against the responsibilities and activities identified in the Position Paper. The evaluation uses a maturity model to enable each council to evaluate its current capability against a target.

EMSIG News

An evaluation platform has been created to capture data from each council. In late April 2019, the evaluation platform was released to councils and will require input from various teams across council.

Additional Training

SES will be conducting several "Introduction to Emergency Management" courses in 2019. As courses are confirmed, dates will be published on the SES website (<https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/em-sector/em-planning/em-training>) where nomination forms for the course can be found.

Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) Project

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) is funding a Secondary Impact Assessment Project. The objective of the project is to collaboratively establish clear guidelines regarding what data councils need to collect when conducting secondary impact assessments.

EHPA EMSIG is one of the participants on the SIA Project Reference Group alongside representatives from regional and urban



councils/shires throughout Victoria.

Once the guidelines regarding the type of data to be collected is agreed upon, there will be further development in technology resources tools and training to support the coordination and activation of SIAs by officers in the field.

FLU Tracking

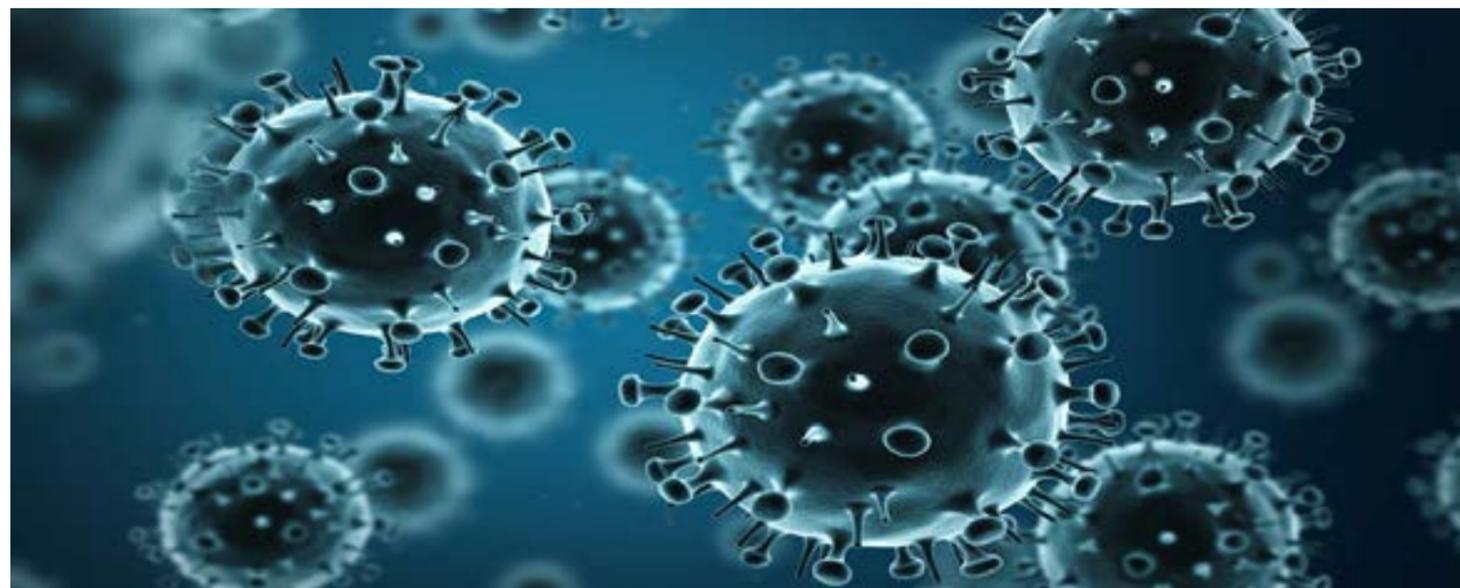
Flutracking Australian is kicking off their Flutracking surveys a month earlier due to an upsurge of flu across the country.

Please be awesome and ASK 2 FRIENDS to join by forwarding the following link: <http://www.flutracking.net/join/inv26>

Please forward this email to all the other big-hearted community-minded people you know who would be willing to give 10 seconds per week to help us track flu. They will receive a weekly flu report and flu map in return!

Thanks for your time and support, and look out for an email survey next Monday. Flutracking Survey Team

Flutracking Australia
<https://www.flutracking.net>
HNELHD-Flutracking@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au
Zoe Smith
 Emergency Management Sig & Emergency Management Planning Officer, City of Moreland



Strawberry Tampering Incident Report

Report to government

Food safety is of fundamental importance to Australia and confidence in the food that people consume is crucial.

Food safety incidents such as the one discussed in this report can result in public health and safety risks as well as widespread consumer concern and large negative impacts to the Australian food industry including significant costs due to recalls and disruption to business.

Such incidents can also negatively impact the trust and reputation of Australian products in international trade.

This report on the tampering of Australian strawberries in September 2018 has been produced by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) in response to a request by the Minister for Health the Hon Greg Hunt MP. This request was "...to investigate whether there are supply chain weaknesses, whether there are actions we can take to assist the police, whether there are systemic changes which are required".



[DOWNLOAD THE REPORT](#)



MSIA Testimonial

As a municipality Baw Baw Shire has experienced a busy peak season with 31 fires within the landscape.

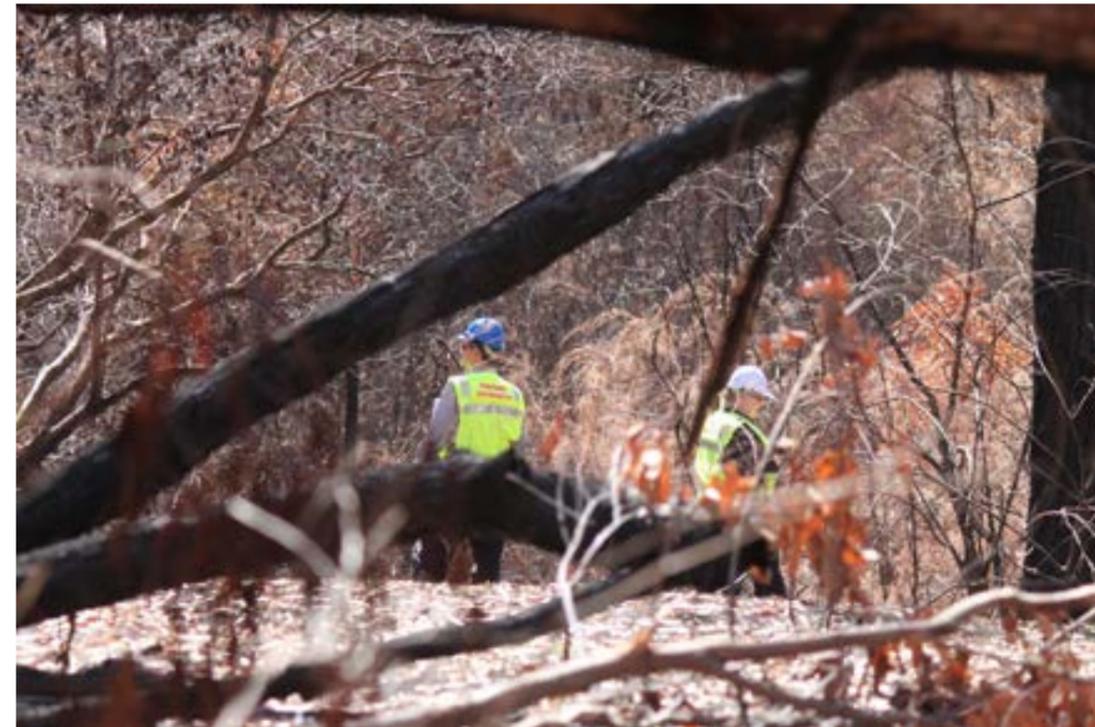
In early February 2019 the Thomson-Jordan Divide Fire and the Walhalla-Stoney Creek fires were of most concern due to their potential to impacted small communities.

The Walhalla-Stoney Creek fire had been expected to impact the communities of Toongabbie, Cowwarr Weir and Heyfield, however in the late afternoon of 3rd February 2019 an unexpected easterly wind changed directed the fire towards the historic township of Walhalla putting it under direct threat. Initial Impact Assessment data from Victoria Police indicated that 11 properties within Walhalla had been damaged or destroyed; this assessment is undertaken within the first 24 to 48 hours.

On Wednesday 20th of February, Baw Baw Shire were granted permission by the incident controller that it was safe to conducted Municipal Secondary Impact Assessments (MSIA) within the impacted area.

Following a briefing at the Erica Incident Control Centre Baw Baw Shires MSIA team heading into the impact area of Walhalla. The MSIA team consisted of Jeff Mills (MBS) and Tahlia Cornwell (EHO).

Walhalla is a gorgeous and pristine historical village in the Great Dividing Range within the Stringers Creek Valley. The remote, steep and unforgiving terrain has made it difficult for modern building and public health standards and regulations to be upheld. Many structures were non-permitted garage/shed structures or extended outbuildings which had been altered to create a "dwelling" for weekends away for the owners in this untouched part of the world. The nature of the structures increased the potential fire risk to these properties There were many and varied health risks and issues within these properties. Most residences were serviced by long drop, or very short drop, toilets. We identified asbestos piping in one property, which will



need specialised removal and disposal. It was thankful that there were no CCA treated posts which also required specialised handling.

All properties were serviced by private tank water, and many of the tanks had been damaged beyond use or repair. One property was quite spread out with a few structures which had a total of 7 water tanks. It was quite difficult to traverse into these properties to ascertain the extent of damage and materials used in construction. The great variance in construction materials presented issues as to the best methods for Council to facilitate disposal of cleared materials. As many were non-permitted structures there were inconsistencies with Council's mapping data and the properties in the outskirts of Walhalla. When

geocoding the assessments, it was discovered that one structure was located on a Road Reserve.

The MSIA team completed assessments using electronic templates, which allowed for geocoding of each location, assessment report, and pictures of damaged properties to complete the picture of property information, which attributes to both council and the resident through the recovery process.

The software program used links the property assessment reports against the owners file so that when a person or property is entered into the system all entries are linked. Completing the forms and assessment data was very simplistic and straightforward as through development with MBS, EHOs, Emergency Management personnel the subject matter proformas required are available at your fingertips.



Continued next page →

MSIA Testimonial (Con't)

As the MSIA team moved from property to property to complete the assessments it was obvious to see new growth starting as they sprouted through the burnt soil.

The templates and equipment provided to undertake MSIA provided the Officers to be able to facilitate and support the community in a timely manner and process which assists those in often the worst experience of their lives.



The MSIA Officers who completed these assessments had not previously undertaken MSIA training or any previous assessment in the emergency management space. Myself, being the EHO who attended, had barely graduated from my qualifications before being asked to complete the assessments.

Due to the extensive community pressure surrounding the incident there was insufficient time to complete the available training around MSIA, which is a two-day course. We were provided a half day familiarisation session to understand the requirements and software prior to heading into the impacted area of Walhalla.

Local Government has a legislative requirement in the emergency management

sector and like the Bachelor of Health Science (Public and Environment Health) there is no formal emergency management for any local government personnel, therefore graduates, including myself, have had little introduction into the emergency management space.

My previous work as a Technical Officer had exposed me to emergency management planning for Residential Tenancy Registrations, which falls well short of the State's requirement for Post Impact Assessment information.

As a new MSIA officer there were benefits to having the Walhalla assessments as my introduction. Due to the remote nature of the property owners there was not the need for psychological personal support to accompany the MSIA officers onto the properties. This did not lessen the impact for officers attending.

One property contained the remnant of a sculpture, which was constructed entirely of children's bicycles, another property had a memorial upon a tree down from the dwelling. The physical absence of the property owners did not mean their presence was not felt.

The time taken to complete the assessments was not only physically and mentally tiring, it also strongly enforced the need for self-care. EAP services are available for officers who complete these assessments and others in need. The nature of the work left me physically and emotionally drained.

The team was very supportive, with some dark humour to alleviate the emotional pressures of the works. This created a comfortable environment for the officer to self-regulate their care requirements and feel free to express the stresses that they were experiencing. There was a debrief at the end of the day to ensure that all team members could suitably refresh to continue with their daily requirements outside of this emergency situation.

This experience has demonstrated to me the need for all EHOs to be provided with MSIA training, including those currently studying and include training on the vital need of adequate support for those who undertake assessments and works within emergencies, but also in the day to day work that EHOs experience.

Tahlia Cornwell
Public Health Officer, Baw Baw Shire Council

Introducing the new Secretary for the Southern & Eastern Community of Practice

Stephen Hodge is the new Secretary for the Southern & Eastern Community of Practice.

We thank Troy Schonknecht the previous Secretary, for all his valuable input and hard work. Stephen Hodge is currently an EHO from the City of Whitehorse.

This is Stephen's response when **Healthy Focus** asked him why he took on the role of Secretary.

"I took on the role in 2019 to ensure the network for the region remains strong. There is always a lot of good information to share between Councils and it is important to get the Councils together to discuss, new improvements, new ideas, emerging food industries and of course the updates on evolving guidelines and legislation. It is also a good opportunity of hearing from the different SIGs in one meeting, not to mention to hear the stories of what EHOs for the region are encountering and how they are managing to deal with the strange experiences we all face in this industry!

"I am always amazed at how all EHOs seem to be faced with uncertain situations or new problems but with the support of co-workers, other EHOs and other agencies we overcome the problem.

It's always an EHO that seems to be the central cog in a bigger machine. Then we share the experiences with each other in these meeting and we all learn and grow stronger as an industry together.

"I mostly look forward to working with all the EHOs for the region and helping develop innovative ideas that will better our industry as a whole!"



symposium.ehpa.org.au



Another Fantastic Food Forum for 2019

The annual Food Forum organised by the Food SIG was held on the 1 April 2019 at William Angliss in the CBD. Roger Sayce from the City of Melbourne was MC for the day and kept the program running smoothly. The Forum was opened by Sarah Annells, President EHPA who commented on the standard and variety of speakers for the day. Following her welcome to the Forum, Sarah presented the EHPA Awards with John Rantino, Partner with Maddocks. The Young EHPA Professional Award was awarded

to Shelley Kaur from Hindmarsh Shire Council and the Robert Handby Team Award recipient was the City of Maribyrnong.

The first presenter was Roger Sayce who discussed a recent successful prosecution by the City of Melbourne of a food premises for breaches of Section 10A(2) and Section 14(1) of the Food Act for serving a dessert containing nuts to a young boy allergic to nuts. The young boy did have an anaphylactic reaction but recovered well. The proprietor pleaded guilty and has implemented a number of changes such as allergen disclaimers on the menu, website and email bookings advising if people have allergies, staff training, development of an allergen matrix, different plate ware for allergen free meals and an EpiPen onsite in case of extreme emergencies.

This was followed by an interesting presentation by Rachel Juras, EHO from Manningham Council and Rob Antonic, Food Safety Manager from Dairy Food Safe Victoria. The presentation concerned license exemptions under Section 22A of the Dairy Act 2000. Exemptions must be applied for in writing and DFSU will consider the

risk categorisation, type and mix of food processed and handled and the proportion of dairy to non dairy foods. There is an exemption process and confirmation is required from Council that it is willing to accept the regulatory responsibility for the dairy food processing at the premises.

There are usually conditions specified when an exemption is granted. Rachel discussed a case study for a premises that she was involved with where the proprietor was

seeking an exemption for repackaging yoghurt. The proprietor was involved in other non dairy activities at the premises. DFSV completed an investigation and concluded that the dairy component was a low risk activity and Council could be responsible for the registration. DFSV advised Council in writing that they would proceed with an exemption for the business.

Justin Peysack, Senior Project Manager with Small Business Victoria discussed the Small Business Regulation Review which aims to reduce the burden to small business. Part of this is the Better Approvals reform to introduce a business concierge model for processing applications by working with Councils over a 6 week period.

Councils need to select one representative from different areas of Council including Economic Development, Planning, Building, Environmental Health, Local Laws, Business, IT and Communications. Seventeen Councils have already been through the process. Cathy Di Bella gave an update from Coeliac Australia. They have completed an Eating Out Survey to members and found some interesting results including that 34% of those surveyed never trust 'gluten free' claims. Coeliac Australia have produced an Incident

Report with key findings such as incorrect labelling and cross contamination being major issues. They have developed a Gluten Free Standard for Food Businesses, online training, new resources on their website, and a Gluten Free Accreditation Program that businesses can apply for. There are currently 24 licensed sites around Australia with sixteen in the process of being assessed.

Forum participants could select from three concurrent sessions which were scheduled twice during the day. Paul Goldsmith and Mira Antoniou from the Department of Health and Human Services presented a session on May Contain Statement- A general overview. John Chadderton and Pauline Maloney also from the Department provided a discussion on the Adequacy of a FSP and to how to assess a FSP and what makes a FSP adequate. The final session was on the Food Safety Risk Assessment- Keep the conversation going from Vanessa Healey and James Smith.



Roger Sayce MC and presenter

After lunch Angela Davies, Manager from Food Safety & Response, FSANZ gave an overview of the Food Standards. She indicated that when developing a new standard they must not be onerous and the introduction of the new standard does not outweigh the cost. This presentation was followed by a very engaging case study from Stephen Hodge and Michelle Barrett from Whitehorse Council concerning a proprietor who was very persistent in avoiding registration and unpredictable.

The outcome was a successful

Continued next page →

Food Forum 2019 (Con't)

prosecution. Jim Smith presented on the Environmental Health Workforce in Australia about an article published in the Journal of Public Health entitled, Environmental Health in Australia: Overlooked and Underrated. Jim's key message was that as a profession we should do something about it and act now!

Erica Clifford from the Department gave an update on the Anaphylaxis notification system. Both private and public hospitals are now required to notify the Department of all cases presenting for the treatment of anaphylaxis.

The notifications are providing valuable data that can assist in identifying trends and evidence for policy and preventing strategies. Between 1 November 2018 to 13 March 2019 there were 933 notifications. One anaphylaxis case suspected as a result of incorrect labelling of packaged food resulted in a recall.

The final presenter was Elise Caldwell, Associate from Maddocks Lawyers who gave an insight on lessons learned from recent Food Act prosecutions. Some of the topics she covered were how your proprietor is and exceptional matters which can pertain to the psychological state and financial position of the defendant. Exceptional matters may influence the magistrate and the outcome of a prosecution. Elise also discussed non pecuniary orders such as good behaviour bond and community corrections orders.

All Forum participants were asked to complete an Evaluation Questionnaire to provide feedback to the Food SIG for future planning.

Some of the feedback included: "Great presentation" by Stephen and Michelle from City of Whitehorse. Attendees found this presentation informative and entertaining especially about the challenges of pursuing the offender.

As always, participants liked hearing about lessons learned from Food Act prosecutions and tips presented by Maddocks.

Jim Smith's presentation on Environmental Health Workforce issues really confronted people about the direction of our profession and challenged us to think about how we

promote the importance of our profession to the broader community. Attendees hope this is something that EHPA can continue to foster further discussion and change.

Participants were interested in the allergen investigation into The Bottega case study and the outcomes of that investigation. Even the suggestions about changes to practices to improve communication between front of house staff and the kitchen were well

Jim's key message was that as a profession we should do something about it and act now!

received. This presentation complemented the presentation on Victoria's Anaphylaxis Notifications System.

The Coeliac Australia presentation was well received and their suggestions and resources available to assist EHOs will be of great assistance.

Participants also rated highly all other presentations.

Thanks to the Food SIG for another great Forum and looking forward to 2020.

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Maribyrnong is transforming at a rapid rate and has a strong "foodie" culture. Its attraction as a restaurant/eatery hot spot created a resourcing challenge for Council's Environmental Health Team.

To maintain the health of diners and the City's reputation, Council reviewed its food safety compliance rates for food businesses in 2015. It found compliance was decreasing and businesses had gaps in their food safety knowledge. This resulted in increased inspections and an increase in workload for the team. Furthermore, there was a projected increase in new food business expected to open, there flagging the need for improved Council support.

To increase food safety compliance rates, Council worked closely with businesses on an education campaign. The aim was to provide increased guidance on food safety matters, while assessing the applicant's food safety knowledge from the beginning of the application process and providing a one stop shop on food safety compliance. This instilled a food safety culture that increase food safety compliance rates and reduced follow up assessments, leading to reduced food related incidences and ultimately safer food for the community.

Council encourages businesses to take part in the process by offering applicants a free meeting and by creating a supportive and transparent environment where their proposal could be discussed at ease. Outcomes for the applicant resulted in less costly structural reworking at fit out due to upfront advice, businesses adopting a food safety culture, a reduction in food related incidences and number of inspections to achieve compliance.

The one-hour pre-application meeting covers the Council's registration process – fee, processing times, structural compliance – layout proposed equipment; food safety requirements – food hygiene training, food processing allergens and food safety program requirements. This gives applicants a comprehensive outlook of what's required of their business across all aspects of service delivery from a food safety compliance perspective.

Applicants are provided with Council's comprehensive New Food Premises Information Kit as a guidance document and importantly applicants have a single point of contact to assist them throughout their application process. Once the application is submitted a comprehensive assessment report is provided to the applicant as a guide for setting up their business.

Feedback from businesses and organisations have been overwhelming positive. Initially applicants were reluctant to attend a meeting due to time constraints and perceived issues the meeting may raise. However, when Council discussed how they would ultimately benefit from a face to face meeting, applicants were more eager to attend.

The model of this initiative has already been duplicated as part of Council's Concierge program and incorporated across the organisation. It can also be utilised by all Victorian Councils.

Although a new approach, it is a program that has no impact on budget, but significant impacts for customers and substantial food safety outcomes.

MADDOCKS AWARDS

Professional Excellence Awards

The Maddocks, Young Environmental Health Professional awards recognise the achievements of our young EHOs that have displayed exceptional efforts with beneficial outcomes. The recipients of this award were nominated by their peers in recognition of their commitment to their profession and community they serve. The award was presented by John Rantino, Partner with Maddocks.

The winner of the **Young Environmental Health Professional Award 2019** was Shelly Kaur from Hindmarsh Shire Council.

Shelly commenced work with Hindmarsh Shire council in 2017 in her first full time position.



Shelley moved from Brisbane to the rural township of Nhill for this sole practitioner role.

Within the first five months of Shelly commencing at Council, Class 1 and 2 annual inspections increased from 77% to 88%.

In 2018 they were at 100% and Council's turnaround time to action

complaints from an average 5 business days to 1 business day.

Shelly's excellent work ethic, passion and commitment to her work and her pleasant demeanour make her a great employee and a worthy recipient of the Young Environmental Health Professional Award.

2019 Robert L Handby Award for Team Excellence

This award recognises outstanding team work to achieve excellence in Environmental Health practice. The 2019 award was presented to the City of Maribyrnong for their innovative Risk Based Assessment Application Process for New Food Businesses. The Environmental Health team also won the Excellence in Service Delivery award from LGPro for their initiative.



Sarah Annells, President EHPA, Sandee Patterson, Foti Beratis & Mette Botheras



A PERTH Indian restaurant has been hit with a whopping fine after a health inspector caught the owner processing pet meat in the kitchen.

A PERTH restaurant has been fined \$14,000 after a health inspector walked into the kitchen and saw the owner processing pet meat.

Kopikaran Krishnasamy, owner of Indian restaurant Cafe Marica, was fined the huge sum and told to pay court costs for breaching health food regulations.

Mr Krishnasamy was charged with having packaged and unpackaged pet meat — 15kg of mutton — at his Canning Vale restaurant.

When the inspector walked into the kitchen, he spotted Mr Krishnasamy processing some of the mutton, the rest of which was sitting in a clear plastic bag and labelled, "Pet food only, not for human consumption".

The restaurant was inspected in February but it took the local council six months to issue Mr Krishnasamy with the fine.

The owner was fined \$2380 and his company, Kalaiamutham Pty Ltd received an \$11,000 fine.

Under the Food Regulation Act of 2009, it is against the law to allow pet meat, not in a sealed packet, in a premises where food is sold.

"The breach related to the fact that pet meat was found at premises where food was prepared and sold for human consumption,"

Mr Cowie said. "Some of the meat was being processed by Mr Krishnasamy, however the City had no evidence that the pet meat was for consumption by customers."

Mr Krishnasamy wrote on social media the restaurant immediately changed suppliers after the health inspector's visit.

"We believe our mistake was trusting our supplier blindly and going ahead with the purchase back in February 2018 when there was an inspection. Since then we have immediately discontinued purchases from the supplier and have stepped up our hygiene practices," he wrote.

"We are truly grateful that no one has consumed the meat and that the inspection officers have helped us save our customers from an unpleasant experience."

This article was written by Natalie Wolfe and first appeared on news.com.au September 1, 2018

Vermin invasion: Sydney construction boom sends rats into restaurants

Outlets closed as rats disturbed by demolition and building work in the city centre relocate

Sydney's construction boom is "stirring up rat populations" and driving them towards restaurants, according to council authorities and rat-catchers.

Two inner-city outlets have voluntarily closed in the past two weeks after rodent sightings, and experts say projects such as Sydney's new light rail are driving the creatures into shops.

A pack of five rats was spotted in the Broadway store of Portuguese chicken chain Oporto last week and, on Thursday, a single large rat was filmed in the Westfield Sydney food court outlet of Taiwanese dumpling chain Din Tai Fung. Geoff Milton, a Sydney rat-catcher with 35 years' experience, said infrastructure projects were agitating the rats.

"The call-outs in the city have doubled over the last two years,"

he told Guardian Australia. "All the building work that's going on in there. Digging up the roads and knocking buildings down. It's a lot to do with infrastructure of the city."

Both the City of Sydney and the owners of Oporto agreed.

"An unprecedented number of major demolition and construction works have been occurring throughout the CBD, stirring up rat populations and leading to increased rat movements," a

spokeswoman for the City of Sydney said.

The company that owns Oporto, Craveable Brands, told the ABC "the vermin appear to have been dislocated by external construction activity in the Broadway area".

Milton, who is the general manager of M&M Pest Control, added that rats were "incontinent" and thus posed a health risk.

"The big thing with rats is that they are incontinent. They pee and wee on the run," he said. "They're not like a dog where they just go have a big pee ... they are dropping their urine and faeces on the run. That could be on food and everything."

"There's a lot of new restaurants opening, new cafes. They throw all their rubbish out in the lane, and it's just food from them. It's easily accessible food."

Both the Broadway Oporto and the Westfield Din Tai Fung voluntarily closed after the rat sightings and said they maintained high standards of hygiene.

and they had sealed the ventilation hole to prevent pests coming in.

"The store has undergone a full decontamination and industrial cleaning process to ensure all surfaces are hygienic and safe," it said. "The store will remain closed and clean until both Oporto and health inspectors are satisfied that vermin cannot re-enter the Broadway store from outside."

On Thursday, Din Tai Fung said it "immediately activated pest control specialists" to disinfect and clean the affected food court outlet. Both businesses are also working with health inspectors.

"We are conducting thorough investigations and improving measures in pest defence during post-operations hours," Din Tai Fung said on its Facebook page. "Food safety is of utmost importance to us and we would like to state our unwavering commitment to this."

The City of Sydney said it would ensure both businesses met health standards before they reopened.

"It is the responsibility of individual food businesses and shopping centre management to eradicate vermin and prevent their entry into food premises," a spokeswoman said.

"City environmental health officers regularly inspect venues to ensure these responsibilities are being fulfilled, and can issue fines or order venues to stop serving food if they fail to comply."

"Unfortunately, rat activity can't be completely eradicated and there will always be some public areas that require further baiting, particularly where food and waste are discarded by the public."

The City of Sydney installs and monitors rat-baiting stations in public places, and can place additional baits depending on the level of complaints.

On social media, customers reacted with horror and many drew comparisons to Remy, the protagonist of the 2007 animated film *Ratatouille*, where a rat becomes a chef. A statement from Craveable Brands provided to the ABC said the rat presence was "unrelated to the store's sanitation standards"



A shot from a video posted to Facebook of rats in the Oporto restaurant. Photograph: Vijay Kumar/Facebook

A shot from a video posted to Facebook of rats in the Oporto restaurant. Photograph: Vijay Kumar/Facebook



POSSUMS IN THE WATER TANK

How do you tell when the water tank is getting low?

When the dead putrefying possum is low enough in the water tank that it starts being progressively slurped through the water tank outlet in chunks, further chopped up by the pump.

Evidently it took 4 hours to clean out all the house water pipes and was one of the worst jobs ever!

Just another reminder why leaf deflectors and first flush diverters are important !!

Callum Morrison
Public Health Coordinator
Benalla Rural City Council



Then it starts to build up in the hot water service and becomes particularly noticeable when fur and a terrible smell starts coming through the shower head that the kids start complaining about it!



Feeling queasy?

This AI finds restaurants spreading foodborne illness

BY FOLAKE DOSU

Food safety at restaurants is not something we can always take for granted. VentureBeat reports that researchers from Google and Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health are using AI to identify "potentially unsafe" restaurants.

These researchers recently published a paper ("Machine-learned epidemiology: real-time detection of foodborne illness at scale") in the journal Digital Medicine which detailed a machine learning model — FINDER (Foodborne Illness DETector in Real time) — that uses search and location data to uncover places hawking suspicious fare.

"Foodborne illnesses are common, costly, and land thousands of Americans in emergency rooms every year. This new technique, developed by Google, can help restaurants and local health departments find problems more quickly, before they become bigger public health problems," said Ashish Jha, K.T. Li Professor of Global Health at Harvard Chan School and director of the Harvard Global Health Institute.

FINDER processes anonymous, aggregated location data from users who have opted into sharing this information. From there, it notes food poisoning related search queries (e.g., "how to relieve stomach pain") and scans the restaurants these users paid a visit. To further refine its findings, it calculates a total ratio of visitors to users who searched for information related to foodborne illnesses.

To combat noisy data (for example, diarrhea is not necessarily related to food poisoning), they created a "supervised machine learning classifier that leveraged additional signals." the result? A model that could classify illness-related searches with 85 percent accuracy.

So far FINDER tests have been conducted in Las Vegas and Chicago where FINDER prompted health code inspections at 61 restaurants and 71 restaurants respectively. 52.3 percent of the restaurants identified by this model failed inspection, whereas the usual baseline rate is 24.7 percent. Generally FINDER restaurants were more likely to be in violation of standards, one way or another. Overall, the model was found to be superior to complaint-based inspections and routine inspections. Furthermore, it helped identify the correct source of foodborne illnesses more often than affected customers.

"Previous research shows that people tend to blame the last restaurant visited, and therefore may be likely to file a complaint for the wrong restaurant," the researchers described. "The FINDER approach is more robust than individual customer complaints, as it aggregates information from numerous people who visited the venue."

The model still needs work - it lags in determining at-risk restaurants due to the incubation period of foodborne illness. It also identifies lower risk-level places more readily than high risk-level ones. Overall, as VentureBeat notes, it's still a step above non-AI solutions, offering 68 percent improvement over current advanced complaint-based systems. Researchers add that they are hopeful their work demonstrates a tool that public health departments around the country can use to tackle foodborne illness and other diseases.

This article was written by FOLAKE DOSU and first appeared on [The Built IN](#) November 8, 2018



Megan Lee: Takeaway bosses jailed over allergy death

7 November 2018

A takeaway owner and manager, who caused a teenage girl's death by sending her a meal containing peanuts, have been jailed for manslaughter.

to food from Royal Spice in Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire, in 2016.

Mohammed Abdul Kuddus and Harun Rashid were found guilty in October.



Harun Rashid (left) and Mohammed Abdul Kuddus both denied causing Megan Lee's death

Megan Lee, 15, suffered irreversible brain damage after having an allergic reaction

sentences if a death results".

At Manchester Crown Court earlier, Kuddus was jailed for two years and Rashid for three. In sentencing, Mrs Justice Yip told them Megan was responsible enough to highlight her allergies when placing the order but "sadly the same responsibility was not at your end".

Judge Yip said the takeaway had no systems or processes to manage allergen control.

She said she hoped "the message is heard" that food suppliers who fail to take proper care "will face significant custodial

After the verdicts in October, Megan's father Adam warned takeaway owners "do not play Russian roulette with precious lives".

Judge Yip added: "Like Mr and Mrs Lee, I hope that this tragic case adds to the growing awareness in the food industry of what can happen if allergies are not taken seriously."

he and Rashid, 38, of Rudd Street, Haslingden, denied manslaughter.

Their trial heard Megan suffered an acute asthma attack after eating food from Royal Spice on 30 December 2016, which her friend had ordered with a note reading "prawns, nuts" to show her allergies.



Royal Spice was closed down following Megan's death but later reopened under new ownership

She added that Kuddus and Rashid, both fathers, had expressed genuine remorse.

She told them: "Neither of you actually foresaw the death of anyone. It never occurred to you that you would be responsible for the death of a young girl.

"You must now live with the guilt of what you have done and the suffering you have caused Megan's family and to your own families."

Never be the same

Owner Kuddus, 40, of Belper Street, Blackburn, had admitted two health and safety charges on behalf of himself and the takeaway, but both

She died two days later in hospital.

The teenager's meal, which included an onion bhaji, a seekh kebab and a Peshwari naan, was found to have the "widespread presence" of peanut protein.

In a statement read outside court after the verdicts, Mr Lee and his wife Gemma said their lives would never be the same after Megan's death.

UPDATE next page →

UPDATE - Megan Lee:

Takeaway boss's allergy death conviction quashed



16 May 2019

A takeaway owner who was jailed for the manslaughter of a schoolgirl who suffered an allergic reaction to a meal has won an appeal against his conviction.

Megan Lee, 15, suffered irreversible brain damage after eating food from Royal Spice in Oswaldtwistle, Lancashire, in 2016.

Mohammed Abdul Kuddus was jailed for two years after a trial in November.

But Court of Appeal judges have quashed his "unsafe" conviction.

Nut allergy sufferer Megan and a friend ordered a meal online from the takeaway on 30 December 2016, and wrote "prawns, nuts" to highlight her allergies.

The trial at Manchester Crown Court heard Megan suffered an acute asthma attack and died two days later in hospital.

The teenager's meal was found to have the "widespread presence" of peanut protein. Kuddus, the chef and sole director of the takeaway, was convicted of manslaughter along with manager Harun Rashid, who had previously sold the business to him.

Three judges in London allowed an appeal by Kuddus, of Belper Street, Blackburn, ruling that his manslaughter conviction "cannot stand". Sir Brian Leveson said Megan's order, including the comment about nuts and prawns, was seen by Rashid.

But there was "no evidence" Kuddus was aware of it so "in those circumstances, the conviction for gross negligence manslaughter cannot stand".

He said the case against Kuddus, who spoke little English and had only taken over the restaurant the previous year, was based "solely upon his failure to introduce appropriate systems at a time when he knew nothing of prospective customers' allergies", and there was "no evidence that he was at any stage notified of Megan's allergy".

Rashid, of Rudd Street, Haslingden, was jailed for three years.

He was convicted of manslaughter, which he had denied, and health and safety and food safety offences which he had admitted.

Sir Brian said no application had been made for a retrial against him on the manslaughter charge.