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A Small Outbreak of Food Poisoning Among Attendees of a Public Health Thesis Examination Conference

To the Editor—Food poisoning is an important gastrointestinal problem and outbreaks are commonly reported. However, outbreaks of food poisoning in medical centers are rarely reported.^{1–3} For example, Chávez-de la Peña et al² and Metz et al³ reported outbreaks of *Salmonella* gastroenteritis among hospital staff. One interesting situation involves outbreaks that occur during medical school conferences.¹ Herein, the authors report a small outbreak of food poisoning that occurred among attendees of a public health thesis examination conference. During the 6-hour examination, several deserts were served to the attendees. After the conference, a medical professor and a student developed acute symptoms of food poisoning. The professor had more severe symptoms with many episodes of diarrhea and vomiting. A previous report by Vinnard et al¹ detailed a similar outbreak among medical conference attendees. Vinnard et al¹ found “multiple food source contamination as the source of the outbreak.”^{1(p73)} In the present case, the exact microbiologic cause of contamination could not be determined because no samples of the contaminated food were available for study. Indeed, most medical centers and hospitals prepare their own food, so adherence to food cleanness and safety standards is expected. However, during a conference, food is typically catered from outside sources and contamination is possible.³

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