

**11<sup>th</sup> Australian Food Microbiology Conference of AIFST, 26-28 March 2003  
Noosa Lakes Convention Centre, Noosaville, Queensland.**

**A case control study of risk factors for *Campylobacter* infection in Australia**

Russell Stafford<sup>1</sup>, Rosie Ashbolt<sup>2</sup>, Leanne Unicomb<sup>3</sup>, and the OzFoodNet Working Group<sup>4</sup>.

1. OzFoodNet, Queensland Health
2. OzFoodNet, Dept. Health and Human Services, Tasmania
3. OzFoodNet, Hunter Public Health Unit, NSW Health
4. OzFoodNet epidemiologists from State and Territory Health Departments funded by the Department of Health and Ageing, Australia and Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ).

Campylobacteriosis is the most frequently notified foodborne disease in Australia. The reported incidence of campylobacteriosis in Australia has steadily increased during the past decade, from 77.4/100,000 population in 1991 (8813 cases) to 107.1/100,000 in 2000 (13,595 cases). Studies conducted outside of Australia have identified several food-based risk factors including the consumption of , cross-contamination from or handling of raw or undercooked poultry and consumption of unpasteurised dairy products. However, data from Australia is limited with only one epidemiological study being conducted to determine risk factors for *Campylobacter* infection among young children aged less than three years. A large case control study of *Campylobacter* infection among all ages is needed to identify potential risk factors in the Australian setting, thereby providing a basis for public health interventions.

This study was designed as a national, multicentre, case-control study of sporadic *Campylobacter* infection among adults and children. The study aims to identify dietary, environmental and behavioral risk factors for *Campylobacter* infection in Australia, to examine age-specific and region-specific risk factors, to identify risk factors associated with specific subtypes of *Campylobacter jejuni* species and to determine the antibiotic susceptibility patterns of *Campylobacter* strains in Australia. This is the first national study of risk factors associated with sporadic *Campylobacter* infection in Australia. Data was collected over a twelve month period during 2001/2002. The methods and epidemiological findings from this study will be presented.