Assessing Ugandan pork butchers' practices and their perception of customers' preferences: A best-worst approach

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Introduction

Food-borne diseases are a major concern of developing countries. Among the drivers, rapidly increasing pork consumption deserves increased attention. Yet there is little documentation in Uganda on the context in which pork is produced, marketed and consumed and the implications this may have on public health. This study attempts to assess the current knowledge, attitudes and practices and looks more into butchers' beliefs about customer preferences by using best-worst (BW) method, which is a special form of a discrete choice experiment.

Picture 1. Pork butchery from outside

Picture 2. Pork butchery from inside

Picture 3. Typical pork meat dish

Picture 4. Fly on pork (*Sarcophaga* sp.)

Material and Methods

Sixty pork butcheries out of 179 mapped in Kampala were randomly selected (Figure 1). In July 2014 on-site observations were undertaken and butchers were interviewed what they think is the most and the least important attributes to their clients when buying pork meat (Figure 2). Best-worst method with a set of previously identified thirteen attributes was used.
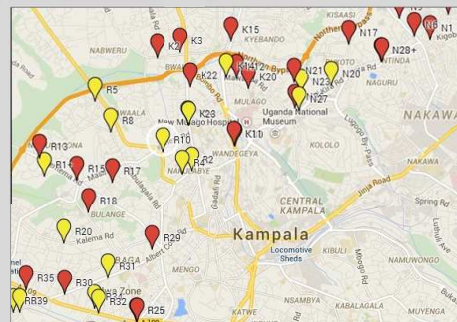
Results

Half of the pork purchased by the butchers came from pigs slaughtered in backyards or non-gazetted abattoirs. Raw pork accounted for half of the total pork sold by pork butcheries. The other half was served as cooked pork and usually consumed on-site accompanied by raw vegetables. The majority of butchers use a wooden stump as a cutting surface. Pest animals are present in most butcheries including rodents, birds and flies. Best-worst scores showed that among the attributes butchers revealed as the most important for their customers were: "Meat from the same day",

Figure 1. Study area with sampled pork butcheries

Please indicate the attribute you think is most important for your customers and the attribute you think least important for them when buying pork meat

Most important	Attribute	Least important
☐	Fat layer of the meat	☐
☐	The butcher is wearing a coat	☐
☐	Cleanliness of the butchery	☐
☐	Butchery close to main road	☐

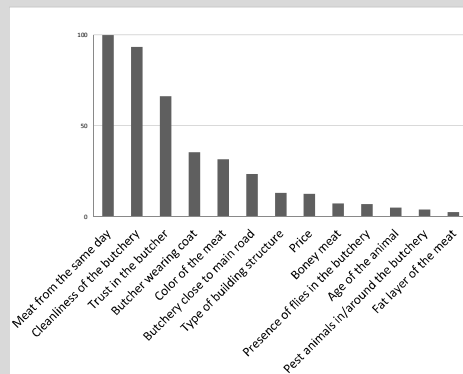**Figure 2.** Example for a choice card

Figure 3. Relative importance of attributes according to butcher's choice

"Cleanliness in the butchery" and "Trust in butcher" while "Presence of flies in butchery", "Age of the animal", "Pest animals in butchery" and "Fat layer of meat" were the least significant qualities (Figure 3). Others varied in-between such as "Price", "Color of meat", "Bony meat", "Butcher wearing coat", "Type of building structure" and "Butchery close to main road".

Conclusions

The results indicate the need to improve food hygiene in order to mitigate food contamination risks but they also show sellers' believes which need to be taken into account and addressed. Bringing this research into use will allow targeted interventions and empower butchers to improve the conditions in their shops, strengthen their businesses, and therefore contribute to healthier clients and public health.

Outlook

A consumer study is envisaged to compare both points of view in order to get a better understanding of existing risks and to share this understanding more effectively with butchers and their customers.

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