

Oral Abstracts

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OVERVIEW OF TOXINS AND TOXICANTS IN OUR FOODS

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Abstract: Toxins and toxicants are regularly monitored by food safety agencies throughout the world as some of these substances have significant impact on human health. While toxicants are produced artificially, toxins are produced naturally by living organisms. During the last decade, we have witnessed increasing number of food safety incidents and scandals which pose serious threats to consumers worldwide. The globalised and complex nature of our food supply chain makes food safety a challenging task and hence consumers are vulnerable to food intoxication as a result of economic adulteration activity or contamination due to climate change, agricultural practice and industrial activities such as generation of nuclear powers. This paper aims to provide an overview of the natural toxins, for example mycotoxins prevalent in food crops, toxicants such as heavy metal, processed contaminants which have accumulated in the food chain and examples of intentional adulteration such as the infamous melamine milk scandal in 2008.