



What is known about food fraud in Australia? A scoping review of the literature

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Food fraud is ‘a collective term used to encompass the deliberate and intentional substitution, addition, tampering, or misrepresentation of food, food ingredients, or food packaging; or false or misleading statements made about a product, for economic gain’.⁽¹⁾ Or, more simply, it is the ‘fraudulent modification of food for economic gain’.⁽²⁾ It is generally financially driven.⁽³⁾ There are different types of food fraud that exist,⁽¹⁾ and certain foods can be more vulnerable to food fraud than others. This scoping review aimed to ascertain the number of academic studies regarding the prevalence of Australian food fraud, identify gaps in the literature and provide recommendations for further scholarly enquiry. This scoping review focused on food fraud generally, together with adulteration, as one of the types of food fraud. A systematic search of scientific literature was conducted. The search terms used were “food fraud”; “food adulteration”; and “‘food fraud’, adulteration, nutrition”. One hundred and eighty articles that considered food fraud (using these search terms) were included. Many studies were published from 2016 onwards and originated from (or focused mainly on) Europe, Asia, the Americas and China. Of the 180 studies relating to food fraud, only two papers (1.1%) considered food fraud with a dominant focus on the Australian context. One of these studies tested the authenticity of honey, which included Australian honey. The remaining paper considered the regulatory framework surrounding food fraud in Australia. This scoping review identified areas for future research regarding food fraud within the Australian context. Recommended priorities for researchers are as follows: (1) conduct studies investigating food fraud prevalence across vulnerable food categories in the Australian market (2) develop recommendations to safeguard against the commission of food fraud within those categories in the Australian market.

References

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