PREVALENCE OF ENTEROHEMORRAGIC *E. coli* 0157:H7 IN EGYPTIAN COASTAL WATER OF THE RED SEA, THE GULF OF SUEZ AND THE GULF OF AQUABA.

Mohammed A. El-Shenawy and Moustafa A. El-Shenawy

National Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries, Anfoshi, Alexandria.

* National Research Center - Dokki - Cairo, 12311, Egypt.

A total of thirty-five coastal water samples, collected at bimonthly intervals for the period April, 1998 / February, 1999, were examined for the presence of enterohemorrhagic *E. coli 0157:H7*. Total and fecal coliforms were analyzed using the membrane filter technique methods. The presumptive *E. coli* isolates proved to be sorbitol-negative were confirmed by the API-20E diagnostic kits, and finally confirmed using the *E. coli 0157* latex agglutination and antisemur H7 tests. Of the total 35 investigated sites, 5 (14%) sites were positive, for the presence of the pathogen, of which 3 (23%) sites out of 13 sites located at the coast of Red Sea and one site (9%) out of 11 sites located at the coasts of each of the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aquaba. Water salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen or pH did not influence the occurrence of this bacterium. From the public health point of view this bacterium should not appear in these areas.