

## Research project IZS VE 03/12

**Scenario workshop and mixed methods approach: two innovative methods for building and evaluating a web-based application designed to communicate chemical risk in food**

**Project coordinator: Licia Ravarotto**

Developing and testing the efficacy of communication tools is an essential objective in risk communication in the field of food safety (Tiozzo et al., 2011). The aim of this research project is to assess a web-based application for communicating chemical risk in food, built through a participatory process designed to directly involve the selected consumer target audience, i.e., adolescents aged between 16 and 18 years.

Specifically, the study will aim to achieve the following objectives:

- to test the “scenario workshop” method in the participatory building of scientific communications in the field of chemical risk in food;
- to develop a web-based communication application through a participatory process;
- to assess the application and the impact of its dissemination via the web;
- to acquire information designed to identify the profile of consumers receptive to the issue in question;
- to assess the potential for extending the web application to other types of food risk in order to standardize institutional procedures.

The target audience and content of the proposed research are a continuation of project RC17/09, “Communicating chemical risk in food: comparing paper and web-based communication tools”. The results of RC17/09, which ended in June 2012, will be considered really important for the development of this project. Besides, starting from international researches on the potential, the evaluation and features of web-based interventions to safeguard health (Webb et al., 2010; Ritterband, Tate, 2009; Marks et al., 2006) it is essential to extend this research to the Italian setting and, specifically, to the subject of food risk, an area which is still largely unexplored. Attention to chemical risk within the framework of food safety is justified by the fact that it is one of the main food-related concerns of Italian and European consumers and that they do not believe this type of risk can be avoided through individual behaviour (EU, 2010; Arzenton et al., 2005). Consumers can, instead play a crucial role in the management and control of chemical risk by adopting correct food habits and behaviours.

To demonstrate this, the topics brought to the students’ attention will be divided into four subject areas. The first three areas will be related to purchasing food products, domestic preservation and cooking. Consumers can actively reduce individual risk of exposure by being aware of the potential dangers and adopting correct behaviours. Lastly, the fourth subject area will be to instil a sense of responsibility in consumers who, as the final link in the chain of production, can contribute to reducing chemical risk by guiding the direction of processing activities.