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Management of Public Health Disasters
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Salad Bar Salmonella Report

Even though the Salad Bar Salmonella outbreak happened in 1984, it may still occur today. However, there might be changes to how it would be handled thanks to improvements in epidemiological monitoring and surveillance. If there are gaps in food safety procedures, salmonella outbreaks from tainted foods can still happen. The source of contamination can now be traced and identified using more sophisticated methods, which might result in a quicker resolution of the outbreak.

The case would have been handled quite differently if terrorism had been initially suspected. From the beginning, law enforcement authorities and anti-terrorism teams would have been involved. The emphasis of the security inquiry would switch from one that is primarily focused on protecting the population's public health to one that identified and neutralize the offenders, secured the area, and guaranteed public safety.

Due to its size, scope, and the high number of illnesses (751 people) and hospitalizations (45 people), this outbreak may qualify as a "public health disaster". Even more troubling is the fact that it was purposefully started by a group with nefarious intentions. Even though it may not have resulted in widespread deaths, the intentional tampering with food with the aim of causing harm and influencing an election qualifies it without doubt as a public health catastrophe.

In this instance, there seems to have been little initial cooperation between law enforcement and public health. Without determining the true cause of the outbreak, the public health inquiry came to a conclusion, and the case was deemed resolved.

If I were to approach the case as a public health professional, I would take the following measures. I would first determine the extent and the source of the pollution while putting in place prompt preventative steps to stop new cases of the illness. Then, I would ensure the affected people's security, providing them with medical attention if necessary. Finally, I would carry out exhaustive epidemiological research to identify the source and the mechanism of the disease.