

A Study on Knowledge and Practices of Water and Sanitary Hygiene among Preschool Children and their Mothers in an Urban Slum Area

Shrikant S. Birajdar¹, Jayalekshmi C S², B. S. Jadhav³, A. S. Nagaonkar⁴

¹Senior Resident, Department of Community Medicine, VilasraoDeshmukh Government Medical College, Latur, Maharashtra, India.

²CS, Junior Resident, Department of Community Medicine, Rajiv Gandhi Medical College & Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Hospital, Thane, Maharashtra, India.

³Ex-Dean, Ex- Professor and Head of Department, Department of Community Medicine, Rajiv Gandhi Medical College & Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Hospital, Thane, Maharashtra, India.

⁴Professor and Head of department, Department of Community Medicine, Vilasrao Deshmukh Government Medical College, Latur, Maharashtra.

Email Id: birajdarshrikant1111@gmail.com

Abstract

Introduction: Public health continues to be greatly impacted by WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene). The potential risk of spreading infectious diseases like cholera, typhoid, hepatitis A, and numerous other water-related illnesses has been associated with inadequate hygiene practices, poor sanitation, and lack of access to safe water. Unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practises can have fatal effects on children. Due to lack of adequate WASH services, almost 700 children under the age of five pass away from diarrheal illnesses every day globally.

Material and methods: The present cross-sectional study was conducted in one of the localities under the catchment area of the urban health training center of a medical college in Maharashtra. All the children in the age group of 3-6 years in the locality were included with complete enumeration. The sociodemographic details, household details and knowledge and practices of mothers and children on hygiene were recorded using a pre-tested questionnaire. Data was analysed using MS-EXCEL spreadsheet and suitable statistical methods.

Results: There were 385 study participants in total. 96% were having household tap as source of drinking water. 42 % were practicing boiling & 52% filtering for water purification before consumption. 6% did not follow any purification methods. 81.3% had in house latrine facility and 18.7 % were relying on public toilets. A very good percentage (>80%) of mothers check the hygiene practices of children before and after eating and after toilet.

Conclusion: The knowledge of mothers on water and sanitary hygiene was good and their practices of hygiene were fair.