

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Access to hand washing facilities at toilet for hand washing at critical times have been found to be a major way of preventing diarrhea diseases, respiratory diseases, intestinal infections, shigellosis infections, skin infection and trachoma. It has been referred to as “do it yourself vaccination”, since studies have shown that it can reduce the incidence of diarrhea by up to 50% (Curtis, 2003) and that of Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) by about a quarter (Rabie, 2006). This dissertation explores the factors influencing utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet among the residence of Purongo sub-county, Nwoya District.

Methods: Data were collected from 216 respondents in July 2013 in a cross-sectional study using researcher administered questionnaires. Quantitative data entry and analysis was done using EXCEL and exported to word. Systematic random sampling method was employed.

Results: Results indicate that latrine coverage is high; Very low utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet; Too low use of water for hand washing; Too low use of soap/ash for washing hands. Based on the conceptual framework, environmental factors; hand washing facilities and latrine facilities, health system factors; health education, home visiting and enforcement of sanitation laws influenced utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

Availability of water for the household use influenced the utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. The use of other options like basin/bowel/bucket for hand washing in homes negatively influenced the utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. The lack of appropriate knowledge, traditional beliefs, taboos and myths about hand washing negatively influenced the utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. Routine sanitary inspection and home visiting by health workers (Health Assistants and Health inspectors) encouraged the construction and utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. Enforcement of sanitation local bylaw influenced utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. The income level had no influence on the utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. Educational level and religious affiliation had no direct influence on the utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Nwoya District Local Government should intensify health education campaigns with specific interest on the importance of having hand washing facilities with soap. Ministry of Health Uganda (Environmental Health Division), Ministry of Water and Environment should formulate and develop appropriate policy guidelines on hand washing with soap with specific objectives to increase the utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. Health Managers and field workers should design appropriate channels of health communication strategies that will target the local traditional myths, taboos, beliefs and attitudes with specific interest to increase utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet. Beneficiaries should play active community participation and mobilizing other members.

A more precise and strong study method should be used in future to study the various factors that could influence utilization of hand washing facilities at toilet should consider the rest of remaining sub-counties.