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Submitter Information

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Abstract Information

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Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Interventions to Combat Childhood Diarrhea in Developing Countries

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Paper

Themes:

To assess the impact of attempts to improve how people are grow and live in developing countries

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Abstract:

This paper provides the results of a synthetic review of the effectiveness of interventions in water, sanitation and hygiene (WSH) in promoting better health outcomes in developing countries as measured by the incidence of diarrhoea among children. One billion people worldwide lack access to clean water, and 2.5 billion do without adequate sanitation. Interventions to effect improvements in WSH are therefore an important focus of efforts to improve quality of life in developing countries. By improving access to clean water and sanitation facilities and promoting better water-use, sanitation and hygiene practices, WSH interventions contribute towards better health outcomes by reducing risk of contracting disease, such as diarrhoea. There is a large and growing literature examining the effects of WSH interventions on outcomes in developing countries, utilising a range of study methodologies. WSH interventions are diverse, ranging from interventions to improve access to water through household and community provision; quality of water through provision of treatment and storage facilities at the source or point-of-use; sanitation facilities through public and community latrines to promote safe disposal of waste; and behaviour change communication to promote safe hygiene practices through education and outreach. Frequently, multiple interventions are promoted simultaneously. Most studies examine the effectiveness of WSH interventions under experimental conditions, with concurrent treatment and control groups and often some element of community or individual randomisation. A smaller number use quasi-experimental methods such as propensity score matching. This review updates the existing systematic reviews and meta-analyses in WSH (Curtis and Cairncross, 2003, Fewtrell and Colford, 2004, Clasen et al., 2007, Ejemot et al., 2008, and the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group, 2008). The review was conducted to Campbell Collaboration (C2) standards. However, the study was also designed to collect data on why interventions are effective or not, by drawing out evidence on the behavioural mechanisms at work and the underlying context, as well as information on the cost-effectiveness and sustainability of interventions. These are of overriding importance to programme planners.
