



# A Commentary on Community-Based Hygiene Promotion and Trachoma Control in Oromia: An African Public Health Perspective

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## Abstract

Trachoma is a leading infectious cause of blindness, with Ethiopia bearing a high burden. Community-based hygiene promotion is a cornerstone of the SAFE strategy for elimination, but quantifying its specific impact within integrated programmes remains complex. This commentary critically examines a recent study from the Oromia Region, Ethiopia, that quantified the impact of a participatory hygiene promotion intervention on trachoma prevalence. The objective is to contextualise its findings within broader African public health implementation. The article provides a narrative analysis and critique of the methodological approach, results, and implications of the referenced primary research, synthesising these with existing knowledge on behaviour change and trachoma control. Key insights: The original study reported a significant reduction in active trachoma prevalence among children in intervention communities, attributing a notable proportion to improved facial cleanliness. The commentary underscores the critical importance of sustained community ownership beyond the initial intervention period. The analysed study provides robust evidence that targeted, community-led hygiene promotion can effectively reduce trachoma markers. However, achieving long-term elimination requires embedding these efforts within strengthened, equitable health systems. Future programmes should integrate longer-term behavioural outcome measures and economic evaluations. National health systems must be supported to maintain community engagement and integrate trachoma control into routine primary healthcare services. Trachoma, hygiene promotion, community participation, public health, Ethiopia, neglected tropical diseases, health systems This

commentary distils key lessons from field research for a public health audience, emphasising the practical challenges and systemic requirements for sustainable trachoma control in an African setting.

**Keywords:** *Trachoma, Hygiene promotion, Community-based participatory research, Oromia Region, SAFE strategy, Neglected tropical diseases*

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