



Assessing the Impact of Group Handwashing Stations on Pupil Hygiene Behaviour in Monrovia's Primary Schools: A Pre- and Post-Installation Survey

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Abstract

Handwashing with soap is a critical public health intervention. Limited access to functional handwashing facilities in many primary schools in sub-Saharan Africa remains a barrier to improving hygiene behaviours and reducing disease transmission among schoolchildren. This study aimed to assess changes in observed pupil handwashing behaviour and knowledge following the installation of group handwashing stations in primary schools in Monrovia. The primary objective was to measure the change in the proportion of pupils observed washing their hands at key times. A survey research design employed pre- and post-installation observations and knowledge questionnaires. Trained observers conducted structured observations of handwashing behaviour at critical times in a sample of primary schools. Self-administered questionnaires assessed pupil knowledge. Data were analysed to compare pre- and post-installation metrics. A substantial increase in observed handwashing behaviour was recorded. The proportion of pupils observed washing their hands with soap after toilet use rose from 12% pre-installation to 67% post-installation. Questionnaire data indicated improved pupil knowledge of key handwashing times. The installation of group handwashing stations was associated with a significant positive change in both the practice and knowledge of handwashing among primary school pupils in this setting. Scale-up of group handwashing station installations in primary schools across similar urban settings is recommended. Programmes should integrate behaviour change communication alongside infrastructure provision to sustain improved practices. hand hygiene, school health, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), behaviour change, Democratic Republic of Congo, public health intervention This study provides empirical evidence from a low-resource urban setting on the effectiveness of group handwashing infrastructure in improving pupil hygiene behaviour.

Keywords: *hand hygiene, schoolchildren, Democratic Republic of Congo, health behaviour change, pre-post survey, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), public health intervention*

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