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HOUSEHOLD SANITATION IN UASIN GISHU DISTRICT IN KENYA

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SUMMARY

In rural Uasin Gishu District in 1990, 78.2% of the households had pit latrines, 11.3% ventilated improved pit latrines, 0.8% water-borne and 9.7% with no toilet facilities. On inspection, 97% of the toilet facilities were in use. Compost pits were present in 52.3% of the households. Utensil drying racks were found in 56.0% of the households. Compared to previous estimates, these levels represent a tremendous improvement in sanitation service coverage. It is recommended that the impact of water and sanitation programmes on health status needs to be evaluated. There is a need for studies to be done on the value of utensil drying racks in disease control.

INTRODUCTION

A safe environment is probably an achievable target in the developing countries, as this is likely to get community and national governments' support. Water sanitation programmes are strong elements of Primary Health Care (PHC) when it comes to implementation. The community involvement in the protection of water sources, construction of latrines, making compost manure and construction of utensil drying racks (UDR) is excellent(1). Apart from acting as an entry point to the community, sanitation is also a composite variable input into a healthy life. A household that has a latrine and uses it is likely to have better personal hygiene practice.

This study was undertaken to form a baseline survey for the improvement of health status in Uasin Gishu through promotion of construction and use of latrines, and construction of compost pits and utensil drying racks. A SIDA-funded water and sanitation programme is to be started in the 1991/1992 financial year.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study of household sanitation was coupled up with immunisation coverage survey done by the District Health

Management Team (DHMT) during the month of April, 1990. Out of 30 sub-locations in the Rural Uasin Gishu, 24 were surveyed. A total of 248 heads of households were asked to show the interviewers the type of latrine they owned. The state of use of the latrine was noted. The presence or absence of a compost pit and a utensil drying racks was also noted. A total of 33 Public Health Officers and Public Health Technicians participated in the survey. The households were randomly selected in each sub-location.

Uasin Gishu District is a highland plateau covering an area of 3,784 square kilometres with an estimated population of 505,000 in 1990; based on the 1979 national population census. The altitude varies from 2,100 metres above sea level in the East to 1,500 in the West. It is drained by four major tributaries of Nzoia River which forms part of Lake Victoria's catchment area. Average annual rainfall is 1,124 mm. The rainy season is in March to September, with a maximum in May. Agriculture is the main stay of economic life of Uasin Gishu District.

RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, out of 248 households surveyed, 78.2% had ordinary pit latrines, 11.3% ventilated improved pit latrines, 0.8% water-borne and 9.7% with no toilet facilities. Moiben division had the highest proportion of households without toilet facilities. On inspection, 97% of the toilet facilities were in use.

Table 1

Toilet facilities by administrative divisions in Uasin Gishu District, Kenya, 1990

Type of toilet	Administrative divisions				Total (N = 248) %
	Soy (N = 42) %	Moiben (N = 65) %	Kesses (N = 94) %	Ainabkoi (N = 47) %	
Ordinary pit latrine	81.0	67.7	85.1	76.6	78.2
VIP	11.9	15.4	8.5	10.6	11.3
Water-borne	0	0	2.1	0	0.8
Bush/none	7.1	16.9	4.3	12.8	9.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

VIP = Ventilated improved pit latrine

Table 2

Percentage of households with compost pits, and utensil drying racks in Uasin Gishu District, 1990

Presence of the need item	Administrative divisions				Entire
	Soy (N= 43)	Moiben (N = 65)	Kesses (N = 94)	Ainabkoi (N = 47)	District (N = 248)
Compost pit	51.2	57.1	56.8	38.3	52.3
Utensil rack	76.7	79.7	7.3	46.7	56.0

Compost pits were present in 52.3% of the households as show in Table 2. Ainabkoi Division had the lowest percentage of households with compost pits. Utensil drying racks were found in 56.0% of the households. Kesses Division that includes part of the peri-urban area of Eldoret town has only 7.3% of its households with utensil drying racks.

DISCUSSION

This study has shown that there has been a tremendous improvement in sanitation service coverage since 1983 in Uasin Gishu District. At that time, it was estimated that 41.2% households use pit latrines, 1.42% water-borne, 0.0012% Aqua privy and the rest bush(2). Only 9.7% households have no toilet facilities with 78.2% using pit latrines, 11.3% ventilated improved pit latrines and 0.8% water-borne. These findings apply mainly to the rural area of the district. In Rift Valley Province, on average, 50% households have no sewage facilities(3). Many districts in the province have on-going water and sanitation programmes. A widescale and detailed sanitation survey is now necessary. This should look into the impact the sanitation programmes have on the health status of the people.

Utensil drying racks utilise ultra-violet light to kill bacteria. Commonly water is not enough for cleaning and a lot of cutlery is rinsed in a small amount of water after

cleaning. Putting them in the sun will supplement the cleaning process. It would be difficult to evaluate the impact of this practice on health. However, this is a popular practice as just over half of the households have the racks.

Compost pits, apart from controlling flies, provide manure for kitchen gardens. Household refuse forms part of the ingredients for the compost manure. This practice should be encouraged because it will have some impact on health through fly control and improved nutrition from the produce of the kitchen gardens.

This study suffers from the disadvantages of a small sample. However, considering the fact that the households were randomly selected, the data is quite reliable.

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