

"HAND WASHING"- KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE AMONG SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN OF 6-14 YEARS, OF LBP PRIMARY SCHOOL, AHMEDNAGAR CITY.

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ABSTRACT

Personal hygiene or hand washing is an issue that every school going children has to deal with. But there is lack of awareness. So proper education is needed. The objectives of present study are to assess the knowledge of hand washing and the methods of hand washing used by students. This is a cross sectional study conducted during health check-up camp at LBP Primary school in Ahmednagar City. Students of 6-14 years age group were selected. A short and structured questionnaire was used and data is collected with the help of class teachers. 37.5% were found as always washing hands. 60% students are using only water to wash hand. There is need to educate and aware about importance of hand hygiene.

Keywords: Hand washing, Children of 6 to 14 years age, Knowledge of Handwashing, Practice of Handwashing.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1980s the food borne outbreaks hampered health of society and in 2009 Swine flu caused serious health problems as well as deaths at many places which in turn led to increased awareness in India about importance of washing hands to protect one from such diseases.^{1,2} Hand hygiene is always an important way for everyone to prevent from infections and infectious diseases. Hand washing is the main protection formula which keeps us protected from hundreds of illnesses every day. It is a good and healthy habit too. Hand washing is the act of cleaning hands. Main aim is to remove soil, dirt and microorganisms which are adhered to hands. Medical hand hygiene refers to hygiene practices related to medical procedures.³ The main medical purpose of washing

hands is to cleanse the hands of pathogens and chemicals which can cause harm or disease.⁴ Hand washing is also known as hand hygiene.⁵

Health Benefits

- ◆ Minimizes the spread of influenza.
- ◆ Prevents the infectious causes of diarrhea.
- ◆ Decrease respiratory infections.

Times to wash hands

- ◆ After defecation
- ◆ Before eating
- ◆ Before and after handling something.

Substances Used

- ◆ Water
- ◆ Other substances- Soap, Ash, Antiseptics.

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Techniques

One must use running water and soap if possible and wash all the skin and nails thoroughly. Ash can be substitute for soap. First rinse hands below wrists and forearms. The most commonly missed areas are the thumbs, wrist, the areas between the fingers, and under fingernails. Paper towel can be used to turn off water.⁶

Previous Study

In 2005, in a study conducted by TUV Produkt und Umwelt, different hand drying methods were evaluated.⁷ The changes in the bacterial count after drying the hands were evaluated. Summarized results of above study are illustrated Table No 1.

Drying Methods	Effect on bacterial count
Paper roll or towels	Decrease of 24%
Hot air dryer	Increase of 12 %

Table No 1 Drying methods and effect on bacterial count.

Rationale of the study

Prevention is always better than cure. In today's life due to urbanization and industrialization pollution is increasing. Hence awareness of hygiene is the most important key point for prevention of various illnesses. Hand hygiene is most important among all because all us use hand to eat. Children were targeted because due to less awareness and/or laziness commonly they don't wash hands or don't wash hands properly. Students of 6 to 14 years selected for the study because they are sufficient mature to understand need of hand washing and they can learn and apply proper techniques of hand washing.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Objectives

- ◆ To study and acquire the knowledge of hand washing in school going children.
- ◆ To know the practices used by them for hand washing.
- ◆ To educate them about hand hygiene.

- ◆ To aware them about the importance of it.

2.2. Study design

Present study is a community based cross-sectional study which was done in randomly selected sample. Total 160 students out 334 were selected by lottery method. Study was completed at LBP Primary School, Kapad Bazar, Ahmednagar City with the help of Ahmednagar Homoeopathic Medical College Ahmednagar. Ethical clearance was obtained from Institutional Ethical committee. After taking permission of school authorities, students were explained the purpose of study. Rapport was built up with children and verbal permission obtained.

2.3. Selection of study subjects

Inclusion criteria

Age 6 to 14 years irrespective of sex of a particular school with consent of school and randomly selected students.

Exclusion criteria

Age below 6 and above 14 years.

2.4. Questionnaire

Structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among all students, 55 (34.38%) were from 6 to 8 years age group, 70 (43.75%) were from 9 to 11 years age group and 35 (21.88%) were from 12 to 14 years age groups (Table No 2). When asked about daily hand washing practice it was found that 60 (37.5%) students were found washing hands properly at the expected times. 70 (43.75%) students were found washing hands often but missing to wash few times. 20 (12.5%) were found washing hands sometimes and 10 (6.25%) students were found never washing hands (Table No 3, Figure No 1).

3 (30%) out of those 10 students were did not have any knowledge about hand washing, 3 (30%) were given strange answer that they don't wash hand due to illness and 4 (40%) were not washing hands due to laziness. Parents of these students have never told them about hand washing and hand hygiene (Table No 4).

Out of 150 students who were washing hand only 60 (40%) were found using aids like soap, antiseptics etc. to wash hands, others (90, i.e. 60%) were washing their hands with water only (Table No 5, Figure No 2). Among 160 students 130 (81.25%) were having good awareness about hand washing, hand hygiene and its importance.

Remaining 30 (18.75%) were not having awareness regarding it (Table No 6, Figure No 3). We asked and observed the sources of information in 130 students about hand washing practice. 60 (46.15) students got to know from their parents, 50 (38.46%) students got information from their teachers, 10 (7.69%) got information from friends and 10 (7.69) were educated about it from their family physicians (Table No 7).

The mean age of study is 10 years. Majority of students (43.75%) were from 9 to 11 years age group. This was by chance only as patients were selected randomly by lottery method. Students who wash hands always are only 37.50%. All these students were from well-educated families and their parents taught them about good hand washing practice and importance of hand hygiene. 60 % students found using only water as an aid for hand washing purpose. Such students were from middle and lower economy class as well as parents of such students were not found too keen about hand washing of their children. Commonly found reasons for not practicing hand washing were not having knowledge, not having awareness, laziness, carelessness of parents and illnesses etc. Most of the students (130, i.e. 81.25%) were observed having awareness about the hand washing practice. The prime source of information was Parents. Teachers, Friends and Doctors were the other found sources from where students got to know about hand washing and its importance.

This study was only to observe about the awareness. Longitudinal study will be more fruitful to achieve 100% awareness among stu-

dents. Communication was the main drawback. Students of all age groups were not included. Further research can be conducted regarding illnesses caused due to non-practicing of hand washing.

4. CONCLUSION

This current study has proved the need of awareness and knowledge of hand washing and its practice in school going children to have regular. They should have adequate information about why hand washing is necessary. Parents are the first teachers to aware them. So, these small children are ready to practice hand washing.

5. REFERENCES

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6. TABLES AND FIGURES

Age	No. of students	Percentage
06 to 08	55	34.38
09 to 11	70	43.75
12 to 14	35	21.88
Total	160	100

Table 2 Age distribution

Status	No. of students	Percentage
Never	10	6.25
Sometimes	20	12.5
Often	70	43.75
Always	60	37.5
Total	160	100

Table 3 Hand washing status

Reasons	No. of students	Percentage
No knowledge	03	30
Laziness	04	40
Illness	03	30
Total	10	100

Table 4 Reasons for not washing hands

Aids	No. of students	Percentage
Water only	90	60
Water & other aids	60	40
Total	150	100

Table 5 Practice of hand washing

Awareness criteria	No. of students	Percentage
Yes	130	81.25
No	30	18.75
Total	160	100

Table 6 Awareness about hand washing

Sources	No. of students	Percentage
Parents	60	46.15
Friends	10	7.692
Teachers	50	38.46
Doctors	10	7.692
Total	130	100

Table 7 Source of information

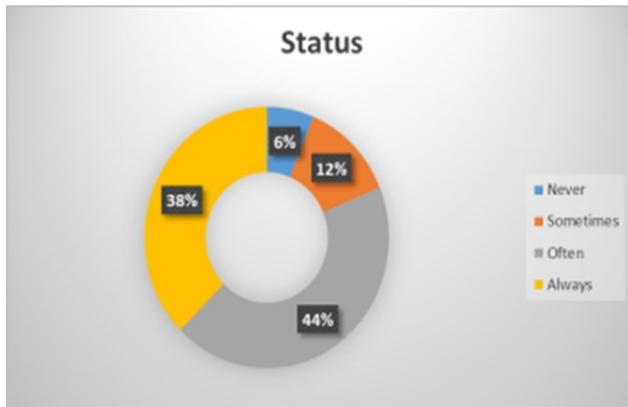


Figure No 1 Hand washing status

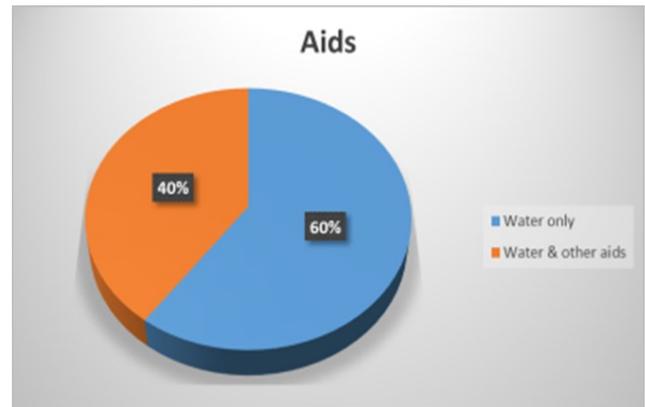


Figure No 2 Hand washing Practice

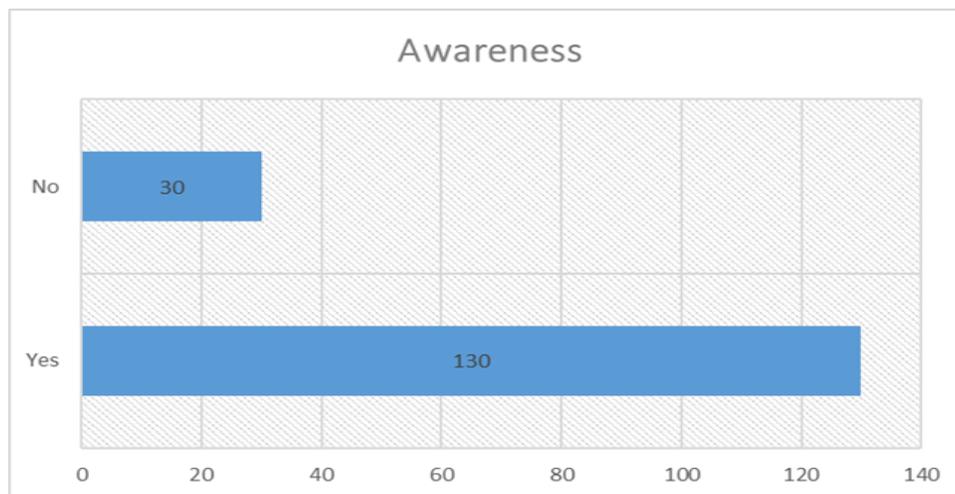


Figure 3. Awareness about hand washing

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