

Hygiene Behaviour Change in Response to COVID-19 in Zambia: A Cross-Sectional Survey

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Introduction

The success of Zambia's COVID-19 response is premised on communities adhering to good hygiene practices. Specifically, communities have been urged to follow the five golden rules: 1) Wear your facemask correctly and consistently; 2) Maintain physical distance; 3) Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer; 4) Avoid crowded places and stay at home; and lastly let me stress the need to 5) Seek medical attention early if you are symptomatic. However, mere provision of WASH facilities as part of this response is inadequate in ensuring adoption of sustainable preventive behaviours.

Methods

We report the results both formative research and a cross-sectional study to assess the ongoing effect and outcome of hygiene response to COVID-19. Data recorded among members of the public included the current level of understanding on hygiene behaviours linked to COVID-19, the prevalent barriers, motives and preferred touch points.

Results and Conclusion

Our results support the convention that mere provision of WASH facilities as part of the COVID-19 response is inadequate in ensuring adoption of sustainable preventive behaviours. Acknowledging that the general public might have been exposed with multiple interventions promoted by various partners, there is therefore need to develop a targeted behaviour change strategy based on the opportunity, ability, and motivation theoretical framework.

Key words: COVID-19 Behaviours, Zambia, Hygiene, Spatial epidemiology