Sustaining hand washing post-covid and what this means for infection control and AMR

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14 June 2022
Outline

• Introduction

• Give some highlight from ILRI study on COVID-19 mitigation and implications for food safety

• A few slides on hand hygiene

• Conclusion
Introduction [1]

- AMR is a significant threat to public health, globally.

- Murray et al. (2022): *Bacterial AMR caused over 4 million deaths in 2019 (Sub-Saharan Africa affected most)*

- “Reducing the incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures” is one of the 5 action areas of the Global Action plan on AMR.
Introduction [2]

- WASH interventions can address several of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Diarrhoea is a serious public health problem especially in developing countries: *Hand hygiene can reduce diarrhoea episodes* (Ejemot- Nwadiaro et al)
- Diarrhoea agents are a frequent cause of foodborne diseases: FBD burden studies (WHO, World Bank)
COVID-19 mitigation

• COVID-19 is not transmitted through food.

• Frequent hand washing, social distancing, and face masks were promoted, to prevent spread (as vaccine studies continued)

• Our study looked at how enforcement of COVID-19 mitigation measures impacted on food safety in East Africa
• Virtually interviewed experts in the countries

• The food safety concerns reported included bulk purchasing, untrustworthy suppliers, transport delays, and weak inspections
• Businesses including food outlets restaurants required to install handwashing facilities

• In Kenya, provision of water tanks by government and partners


• At homes, families installed hand washing stations = *washing of hands when returning home*

• Sanitizers recommended but thought to be expensive

• Lowering the cost of soap – reported in Burundi
• Indications that the informal markets were not well supplied with enough water and soap

• Compliance issues including refusal to wash hands when requested to do so, and using the water provided for non-intended purposes.

• In Kenya, complains over the management of the water tanks (national, or central government)
Hand hygiene [1]

- Hands can be contaminated at any time, and at any place (home, school, hospital, etc.)
Hand hygiene [2]

• Hand washing is a simple measure but not everyone can access it: *Globally, three in 10 people, do not have a place in their homes to wash their hands with water and soap (UNICEF, 2021)*

• Initiatives to addressing the gap:

  https://globalhandwashing.org/global-handwashing-day/about-ghd/
Hand hygiene [3]

• **Hand Hygiene for all Initiative** [WHO, UNICEF]

• Defines short-, medium-, and long-term measures:

  *Political leadership, behavior change, supply hand hygiene products/services, policies and strategies, institutional arrangement, financing, monitoring, capacity building*

- Homes
- Schools
- Healthcare
- Public places – transport, worship
- Places of work
- Others

Hand hygiene [4]

- Frequent hand washing can reduce risks of infection and lower transmission rates, avoiding unnecessary use of antimicrobials.
- Antimicrobial use is a driver of AMR.
- AMR is best addressed through One Health approach
Conclusion

• The level of hand hygiene, which was witnessed during the pandemic, is proposed, to prevent future pandemics, and ensure food safety.

• Already there are rich resources which can be used to promote hand hygiene.

• First, we need to prioritize hand hygiene, and think differently, and consider approaches that encourage behavior change (homes, communities, hospitals, markets).
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