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# HYGIENE CHECKPOINT: HANDS UP!

PUSHING MORE ON ENHANCING HAND HYGIENE EXPERIENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

The whole world has been drastically awakened since the COVID-19 boom. Various government and non-government health agencies are looking for ways to combat the new pandemic. Appropriate pharmacologic interventions require a long process in identification and manufacturing, but the disease needs a rapid response.



Hand Hygiene (HH) or Handwashing is one most important, easy-to-do, and economical manner of protecting oneself from deadly diseases and microorganisms. It is a helpful tool on top of every preventive health protocol everywhere.

This policy brief is tailored to convince policymakers of the Philippine government that enhancing Hand Hygiene experience of every Filipino has a significant bearing on achieving optimal health.

Hand hygiene can lead healthier lives of the household, the hospitalized, the worker, the public, and the economy. Therefore, firm reinforcement of Hand Hygiene as a national preventive health protocol will positively impact population health and boost the economic system in the country.



Est. 1981 Institute for Strategic Research and Development Studies

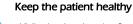
# **KEY MESSAGES**

### **Investing more on Hand Hygiene:**



### Keep the family healthy

\* Enhancing the HH experience of every household significantly lessens the disease burden of diarrhea and respiratory infections especially among children, saving the lives of 1.4 million children each year.<sup>[11]</sup>





Vigilantly observing the five moments of HH in hospitals among HCWs will decrease transmission of HCAIs and related diseases by 40%, preventing 10 patients to be infected in developing countries for every 100 hospitalized individuals.<sup>[12]</sup>

# Keep the workforce healthy

\*There will be less likelihood of sick leave and absenteeism (40%) leading to sustained work performance when every personnel get involved in keeping their hands clean.<sup>(6)</sup>



#### Keep the community healthy

\*Rapid spread of CAIs and other communicable diseases will be reduced if everyone will eagerly participate in the HH routine at least 5 times a day. [1]



#### Keep the economy healthy

\*A healthy population will be a great asset in strengthening and increasing economic welfare. With better HH compliance, diseases will be prevented thereby cutting healthcare costs, more opportunities for progress, competent and efficient work outcomes, high product safety standards, and ultimately, high investments and revenues.<sup>[4]</sup>

OISCLAIMER: The views provided in this policy brief do not reflect the official views of the researcher's institutional affiliation. These insights are offered voluntarily as a course requirement for DSOC 224 Demography. All errors are min

# HAND HYGIENE IN PH AT A GLANCE

# THE HOUSEHOLD

In 2017, the Philippines had an 89% basic handwashing area, while 6% have limited service level (without soap). On the contrary, 14% of the families have no hand washing facility. Although most of the 17 regions reached the 82-96% threshold on this facility, there are still regions at the bottom two: SOCCKSARGEN, 79.7% and ARMM, 65.6% respectively. [9]

### IN THE HOSPITA

There is still data insufficiency regarding HH and HAIs in HCFs in the country even if the Department of Health, along with Philippine Hospital Association are actively promoting HH in all its HCFs. In one study conducted in a Philippine tertiary hospital, only 11% (less likely doctors, most likely nurses) had HH compliance. [5]

# AT THE WORKPLACE

It is reported that 49% of Filipinos do not wash hands after using gadgets such as phone. When running errands outside the house (e.g. commuting after work), 50% do not wash either. [8]

#### IN PUBLIC SETTIN

A shocking 80% do not wash hands after a handshake and 40% are non-washing when touching small children. In addition, 70% of them don't wash their hands after coughing or sneezing. In a toilet at the mall and/or marketplace, 64% Filipinos do not wash their hands.[8]

#### ON ECONOMY

In 2018 alone, the Philippines spent roughly 174M pesos for infectious and related illnesses. [10]



An example of a great platform to facilitate learning and collaboration in handwashing behavior change between hygiene experts from civil society, government, research institutions, and the private sector. Highlights of the Think Tank include:

- oadening of focus not only on building HH facilities but most importantly, behavior change on dividuals (can be affected by e.g. environmental, sociocultural factors)
- Meeting the problem on HH tools (soap and water) insufficiency as well as not neglecting proper HH technique
- For HH behavior change to occur, it must be anchored on: evidence, use of multiple strategies, and best-fit approaches to the needs of the target community
- Getting to know the HH participants will further increase understanding of their uniqueness that can easily recognize specific HH needs
- Checking the interaction of HH on other behavior change factors will help in the achievement of
- Improving WASH implementation as it creates good HH habits in the community, especially in children as it can decrease incidence of diarrhea and improve brain function
- Developing a coordinated system by local, regional, and national level on HH monitoring, not fully dependent on international SDG protocols, but making it a reference to strengthen public govern-
- Connecting with the scientific community, policymakers, and other stakeholders in HH discussions will bring in more knowledge and discoveries for better decision-making



As per DepEd Order No. 10, series of 2016, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) in School (WinS) was implemented where HH is a component and has been part of around 35, 005 schools nationwide (SY. 2018-2019) that reached star level in implementation.

However, 50% of these schools had basic facility for group HH but in daily HH supervision alone, only 37.4% schools participated. [3]

# CHALLENGES IN HAND HYGIENE COMPLIANCE

The disease does not choose who it will attack, rather, it thrives more on the contaminated, the unprepared, and the vulnerable. People are urged to wash their hands more often, yet this practice cannot be fully activated overnight. This behavior has to be established long before any disaster happened. Taking handwashing not only in time of health crisis but in everyday life can reap remarkable benefits for well-being.

Hand Hygiene Facility Procurement. Having access to functional HH facilities in all public areas require the support (financial, physical, technical) of all, especially from the public government and its health sector.

Advertising, Awareness, Adaptation. Constant, clientsensitive reminders (through mass/social media, posters, publications, and others) are needed for everyone to remember the forgotten—basic HH with soap and water.

New and Existing Best Methods. Applying proper HH anchored on research will facilitate formation of right HH habits that can as well influence others to do the same.

**Detection, Documentation, and** Timely and complete record-keeping of all HH activities will be a great contribution to information sharing, fill knowledge gaps, and see trends in HH improvement.

Strict Surveillance. Careful selection of trusted hygiene professionals in the HH program to monitor public HH practices (inclusive of personal HH kit on [local/overseas] travel). Fining system will be imposed, with monetary collection directed to the established HH institution.



Hand Hygiene is everyone's responsibility! © Getty Images

This policy brief is a compilation of selected recommendations

from a workshop joined by 67 multi-sectorial hygiene experts from 13 countries last October 10-12, 2018 in Manila, Philippines. This was the first Global Handwashing Partnership's Handwashing Behavior Change Think Tank that happened in Asia. For more information, visit www.globalhandwashing.org



Handwashing with soap and water still proves as the "gold standard" of infection prevention and control.

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Visca, Baybay City, Leyte, PHILIPPINES Trunkline: +63 (53) 565 0600 Fax No: +63 (53) 563 7067

Meet the Researcher

HADASSAH A. ESPERIDION is in her second year. M. Sc. in. Development Sociology. She loves to learn the art of research