

In Homa Bay County, many households have poor access to improved sanitation facilities, are using unimproved latrines and practice open defecation.

Access to clean water and proper sanitation facilities is important in safeguarding the health of people and communities. Poor sanitation and unsafe drinking water cause illness and death through diarrhoeal diseases. A recent study sought to establish the effects of poor sanitation on public health, the environment and well-being in Homa Bay County. **What do the findings show?**

Key contributors to diarrhoea in children in Homa Bay County

- Poor disposal of faecal matter leading to contamination of the environment
- Contaminated sources of drinking water
- Caregivers not using soap to wash hands after toilet



In 2017, diarrhoea was a leading cause of illness in children in Homa Bay, after malaria and upper respiratory tract infections (source: DHIS data)



Diarrhoea in children in Homa Bay appears to be linked to sources of drinking water.

52% of the water samples collected from households and local water sources in Homa Bay and tested were contaminated with *E. coli*.



Diarrhoea in children in Homa Bay appears to be linked to caregivers' personal hygiene habits and exposure to sanitation messages.

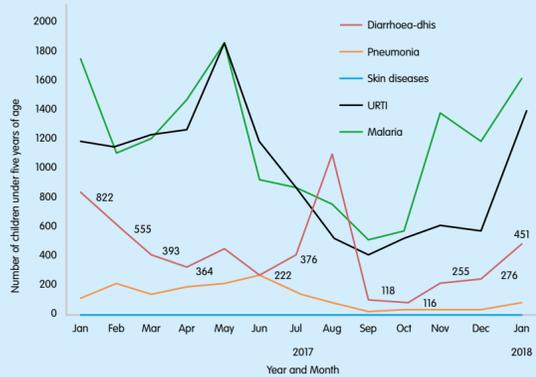
13% of caregivers of a child who had diarrhoea washed their hands with water only (no soap) after using the toilet, compared to only 5% of those whose child did not have diarrhoea.

69% of caregivers of a child who had diarrhoea had heard or received messages about sanitation, compared to 79% of those whose child did not have diarrhoea.

Recurrent diarrhoea appears to be a common problem among children in Homa Bay.

72.5% children who had diarrhoea during the study (cases) had suffered diarrhoea in the two weeks before, compared to only **16%** of the children brought for treatment for other health issues (controls).

20.4% of households who had a child suffering diarrhoea had a family member who had been treated for typhoid in the six months before survey, compared to **17%** of households whose child did not have diarrhoea.



Poor disposal of faecal matter contributes to contamination of the environment and water sources.

52% of faecal matter in Homa Bay is unsafely disposed of in the environment.

13% of households with a child suffering from diarrhoea use open defecation, compared to 9% of those in which the child did not have diarrhoea.

Recommendations:

To address this situation, Homa Bay County Government should:

- Improve faecal sludge management and ensure water treatment for all
- Ensure children with diarrhoea receive appropriate treatment
- Increase sanitation and hygiene campaigns
- Address social exclusion and discrimination in community and household sanitation
- Adequate allocation of funds for county-wide sanitation programmes.

For more information on these findings, see report:

Understanding the Effects of Poor Sanitation on Public Health, the Environment and Well-being – Homa Bay County. 2018. Report of Research Findings published by the Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP) programme.

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