Managing Small Children’s Sanitation: Formative Research from Cambodia
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Background
- Recital contamination of water and food causes diarrhea, currently responsible for the deaths of 560,000 children under the age of five annually, and also a leading cause of children’s malnutrition worldwide.
- Child malnutrition can also be caused by environmental enteropathy, which inhibits children’s absorption of nutrients in their gut.
- This condition also associated with exposure to unhealthy air and water, and has been hypothesized to be linked to fecal contamination in the home environment.
- Lack of adequate sanitation has been linked to child stunting both in Cambodia and elsewhere, with findings indicating that open defecation can inhibit children’s growth.
- Sanitation coverage in rural Cambodia is currently the lowest rate from 50% to 15%.
- Even when a toilet is present, children under age 5 are often not able to use it for fear of their failing in, injurying themselves, or getting the disease, meaning they continue to practice open defecation and urination at home, exposing family members to pathogens transmitted through their feces.
- Children under 5 years of age are most vulnerable to disease transmission.
  - They are more susceptible to infections.
  - They are more likely to develop complications.
- There are the highest cases of childhood diarrhea.
- They have a higher susceptibility to waterborne illnesses.

Research Methods

Household Survey
- The most common defecation site was the latrine (26%), followed by outside (20%), then open defecation in the yard (18%).
- Other sites included disposable diapers, cloth diapers, paper towels, and clothing.
- The presence of more than one type of defecation site in a household was common (36%).
- The latrine was the most common site (63%) of defecation for children under 5 years of age, followed by outside (19%), then open defecation in the yard (18%).
- Children under 5 years of age were more likely to defecate outside (30%) than the latrine (22%).
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Results
- The latrine was the most common site of defecation for children under 5 years of age, followed by outside (19%), then open defecation in the yard (18%).
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Discussion
- The Cambodia 2012 DHS found that only 19% of toilets in children under 5 years of age were disinfected hygienically. These findings indicate that there is a high risk of infection among children under 5 years of age.
- The presence of more than one type of defecation site in a household was common (36%).
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Focus Group Discussions
- After the collection of survey data collection, focus group discussions were held, 2 in each practice.
- Focus groups involved in-depth discussions about barriers and facilitators to children’s defecation practices.
- Participants included small children, parents, and caregivers of children.

External drive of type of sanitation

References

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