

The sanitation problem: what can and should the health sector do?

WaterAid study points to critical role for health system in securing progress on sanitation and realising related health outcomes

Key themes:

1. Diseases attributable to poor sanitation kill more children than AIDS, malaria and measles put together.
2. Half of the people living in developing countries do not have access to even a basic toilet – this is a major risk to public health.
3. The enduring challenge on sanitation is not how to provide infrastructure but how to promote uptake.
4. Creating demand and changing behaviour are both areas of comparative advantage for the health sector.
5. The health system has an essential role to play in driving sanitation uptake.

WaterAid is an international NGO focused exclusively on improving poor people's access to safe water, improved hygiene and sanitation. This research is being conducted in collaboration with the University of North Carolina Gillings School of Global Public Health. The research looks at current health system arrangements for sanitation in four countries in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Findings will be available in Autumn 2010.

For more information visit www.wateraid.org/WASHandhealth or contact olivercumming@wateraid.org.

