

Handwashing and water security in the context of a pandemic

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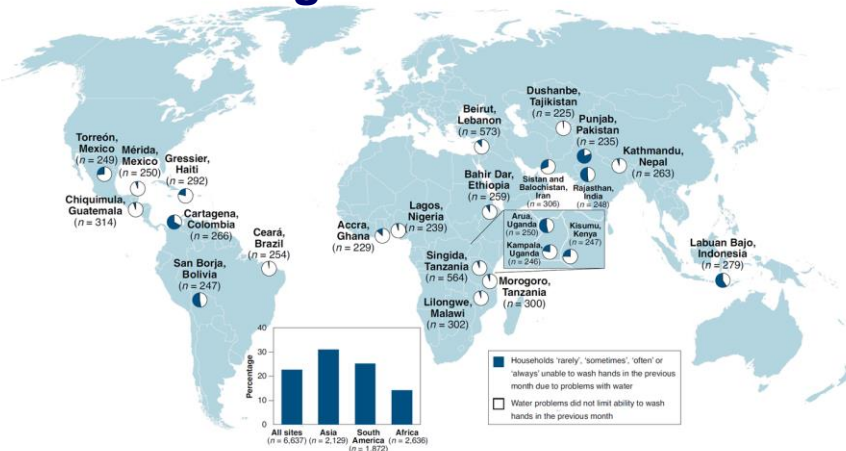
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Aims

1. To consider issue of household water (in)security as a function of water availability, quality & accessibility
2. To provide recommendations (based on latest evidence) on reducing water (in)security → improve human health & wellbeing

40% of households lack basic handwashing facilities



(Hannah et al., 2020; data from Young et al., 2019)



Take-away messages

- Access to safe water is basic human right not met for large sections of world's population
- Urgent action on water security is essential to better prepare societies for the future, including global health crises (wake-up call)
- Across world, policymakers focus on:
 - investment in water infrastructure
 - water independent alternatives
 - behavioural change & knowledge promotion
- Prioritise holistic, evidence-based solutions that address 3 facets of water (in)security: availability, quality & accessibility

Fig. 1 | Proportion of households across 23 sites in 20 low- and middle-income countries that were unable to wash their hands in the previous month because of problems with water. Data are from ref. 3 (n = 6,637).