AN INTERVENTIONAL STUDY ON THE LEVELS OF KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICE ON HAND WASHING AMONG THE RESIDENTS OF KAMPUNG STAPANG I, SIBU FROM 11TH JUNE TO 17TH AUGUST 2012

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A report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the MDP 40210 (Community Medicine and Public Health Posting)

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UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matric Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18162</td>
<td>Chan Siew Foung</td>
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<td>Amal Athirah binti Zarzilah</td>
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<td>Muhammad Khalid bin Mohd Yusof</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Siti Safra Omar binti Mohd Azan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22632</td>
<td>Wirdatul Farah bt Said</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20959</td>
<td>Fatin Nabila binti Abdul Aziz</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Bong Yee Hong</td>
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<td>Farahana bt Jaafar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23777</td>
<td>Kong Sing Ling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23813</td>
<td>Lee Chen Dar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23907</td>
<td>Looi Zhen Siang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24263</td>
<td>Nasuha binti Nordin</td>
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<tr>
<td>24531</td>
<td>Nur Aizzudin Azzfar bin Harun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24599</td>
<td>Nur Iwana bt Abdul Taib</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24602</td>
<td>Nur Jalilatul Husna binti Mansor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24672</td>
<td>Nurhamizah binti Ismail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24874</td>
<td>Rashidah binti Rusli</td>
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<tr>
<td>25175</td>
<td>Suguna A/P Seraman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25242</td>
<td>Tan Shong Sheng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25266</td>
<td>Teh Huey Chiat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25410</td>
<td>Yap Oi Chia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25420</td>
<td>Yeong Jin Yuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25441</td>
<td>Zafirah Kaiyisah binti Abd Karim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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ABSTRACT

Hand washing practice is one of preventive measures for some common infectious diseases. Thus to promote hand washing among community, level of knowledge and awareness among the population should be assessed so that appropriate interventions can be carried out. The objective of this study was to study the knowledge, attitude and practice on hand washing among residents of Stapang I aged 18 and above from 11th of June to 17th of August 2012. The results obtained were then using as the baseline data to conduct an intervention programme beneficial to the community to enhance their level of knowledge, attitude and practice towards hand washing. Data collection was done by face to face interview using interview-based questionnaire. Data analysis was done using SPSS software version 20.0. Results showed that 50% of the respondents had good knowledge and good attitude while 63.3% had good practice towards hand washing. Post-intervention study showed significant improvement in the total score for knowledge and attitude towards hand washing (p<0.05), but no significant increase in the total level practice (p>0.05). In conclusion, there is a great need for intensive intervention in order to enhance the practice of hand washing among the respondents.
ABSTRAK

Amalan mencuci tangan adalah salah satu cara mencegah penyebaran sesetengah penyakit berjangkit. Oleh itu untuk memupuk amalan tersebut dalam kalangan komuniti, tahap pengetahuan dan kesedaran dalam kalangan penduduk perlu dinilai supaya campur tangan yang sesuai boleh dijalankan. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan mengenai amalan pencucian tangan dalam kalangan penduduk Stapang I berumur 18 tahun ke atas dari 11 Jun hingga 17 Ogos 2012. Keputusan yang diperoleh digunakan sebagai data asas untuk menjalankan campur tangan yang dapat memberi manfaat kepada masyarakat bagi meningkatkan tahap pengetahuan, sikap dan amalan ke arah amalan pencucian tangan. Pengumpulan data telah dilakukan melalui temuduga secara bersemuka dengan menggunakan soal selidik berasaskan temubual. Analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan perisian SPSS versi 20.0. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa 50% responden mempunyai pengetahuan dan sikap, manakala 63.3% mempunyai amalan pencucian tangan yang baik. Kajian pasca-campur tangan menunjukkan peningkatan yang ketara dalam jumlah markah pengetahuan dan sikap tentang pencucian tangan (p <0.05), tetapi tidak ada peningkatan yang ketara dalam jumlah tahap amalan (p>0.05). Kesimpulannya, campur tangan intensif amat diperlukan untuk meningkatkan kesedaran terhadap pencucian tangan dalam kalangan responden.
# TABLE OF CONTENT

| Group Members | i |
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Abstract | iii |
| Abstrak | iv |
| Table of Contents | v |
| List of Annex | x |
| List of Tables | xi |
| List of Figures | xii |

## CHAPTER 1: Introduction

| 1.1 Background information | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem statement | 3 |
| 1.3 Significance of the study | 5 |
| 1.4 Objectives of study | 5 |
| 1.4.1 General objective | 5 |
| 1.4.2 Specific objectives | 5 |
| 1.5 Research questions | 7 |
| 1.6 Research hypotheses | 7 |
| 1.7 List of variables | 8 |
| 1.8 Conceptual framework | 9 |
| 1.9 Operational definitions | 10 |
CHAPTER 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Proper hand washing in community

2.3 Benefits of hand washing in relation to diseases
   2.3.1 Gastrointestinal diseases in relation to hand washing
   2.3.2 Respiratory diseases in relation to hand washing
   2.3.3 Skin disease, intestinal worms and eye infections

2.4 Relationship of socio-demographic characteristics with knowledge, attitude and practice of hand washing
   2.4.1 Age
   2.4.2 Gender
   2.4.3 Ethnic group
   2.4.4 Religion
   2.4.5 Education level
   2.4.6 Income
   2.4.7 Occupation

2.5 Relationship between facilities availability and hand washing practice
   2.5.1 Water supply
   2.5.2 Water stands and sinks
   2.5.3 Soaps

2.6 Knowledge, attitude, and practice of hand washing
   2.6.1 Knowledge
   2.6.2 Attitude
   2.6.3 Practice

2.7 Intervention
   2.7.1 Knowledge, attitude and practice change following health intervention program
   2.7.2 Types of intervention
CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Study design 26
3.2 Study population and place of study 26
  3.2.1 Inclusion criteria 27
  3.2.2 Exclusion criteria 27
3.3 Sample size determination and sampling procedure 28
3.4 Data collection instrument 30
3.5 Data collection procedure 32
3.6 Intervention 34
3.7 Statistical analysis 34
3.8 Ethical issue 34
3.9 Duration of study 35

CHAPTER 4: Results

4.1 Introduction 36
4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents
  4.2.1 Age 37
  4.2.2 Gender 38
  4.2.3 Ethnicity 39
  4.2.4 Religion 39
  4.2.5 Level of education 40
  4.2.6 Occupation 41
  4.2.7 Household Income 42
4.3 Facilities information of the respondents
  4.3.1 Sources of water supply 43
  4.3.2 Water shortage 44
  4.3.3 Number of working washing stand 45
  4.3.4 Availability of soap 45
4.4 Level of knowledge on hand washing
  4.4.1 Sources of knowledge on hand washing 46
  4.4.2 Total level of knowledge on hand washing 47
4.5 Attitude on hand washing 49
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Level of practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.1</td>
<td>Practice towards hand washing (moments &amp; frequency)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.2</td>
<td>Practice towards hand washing (method)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Relationship between knowledge on hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Relationship between attitude towards hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>Relationship between practice towards hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>Relationship between facilities availability and practice towards hand washing</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>Relationship between knowledge, attitude and practice on hand washing before intervention</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>Relationship between Availability of Education and Information on Hand Washing and Practice towards Hand Washing</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>Post-intervention results</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13.2</td>
<td>Change of level of knowledge towards hand washing following intervention</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13.3</td>
<td>Changes of attitude towards hand washing following intervention</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13.4</td>
<td>Changes of practice towards hand washing following intervention</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER 5: Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1</td>
<td>General objective</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2</td>
<td>Specific objectives</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Details of intervention activities
5.4.1 Talk
5.4.2 Hand washing demonstration
5.4.3 Exhibition
5.4.4 Quizzes
5.4.5 Games
  5.4.5.1 Pairing game
  5.4.5.2 Jigsaw puzzle
5.5 Intervention activities feedback
5.6 Limitation
5.7 Conclusion

CHAPTER 6: Discussion
6.1 Introduction
6.2 The levels of knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) on hand washing
6.3 The relationship between knowledge of hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics
6.4 The relationship between attitude of hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics
6.5 The relationship between practice of hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics
6.6 The relationship between facilities availability and hand washing compliance
6.7 Correlation among knowledge, attitude and practice on hand washing
6.8 Changes in knowledge, attitude, and practice after intervention
6.9 Limitation

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion & recommendation
7.1 Conclusion
7.2 Recommendation
BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNEX

ANNEX 1. Research timeline for pre intervention research activities 105
ANNEX 2. Research timeline for post intervention research activities 106
ANNEX 3. Questionnaire 107
ANNEX 4. Feedback form 127
ANNEX 5. Photos 131
ANNEX 6. Map 133
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.1 Age distribution of the respondents</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.2 Distribution of the respondents by ethnicity</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.3 Distribution of the respondents by religion</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.4 Level of education among the respondents</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.5 Monthly household income of the respondents</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.6 Number of water supply among the respondents</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.7 Number of working washing stand in the respondent’s household</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.8 Sources of information on hand washing</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.9 General knowledge regarding hand washing</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.10 Distribution of the respondents by attitude toward hand washing</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.11 Methods in hand washing after four moments among the respondents</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.12 Relationship between knowledge on hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.13 Relationship between attitude on hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.14 Relationship between practice towards hand washing and socio-demographic characteristics</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.15 Relationship between practice towards hand washing and facilities availability</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.16 Correlation matrix of knowledge, attitude and practice of hand washing</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.17 Mean changes of knowledge score following intervention</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.18 Relationship between practice towards hand washing and availability of education and information on hand washing</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.19 Mean changes of attitude score following intervention</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 4.20 Mean changes of practice score following intervention</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1  Number of respondents to specific question in feedback form

### LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.1  Percentage distribution of respondents by gender</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.2  Percentage distribution of respondents by occupation</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.3  Sources of water supply among the respondents</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.4  Frequency of water shortage among the respondents in the past 3 months</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.5  Percentage distribution of availability of soap in the respondent’s household</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.6  Percentage distribution of availability of education and information on hand washing among the respondents</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.7  The level of knowledge on hand washing</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.8  Level of attitude toward hand washing among the respondents</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.9  Level of score among the respondents</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.10 Level of knowledge of the respondents following intervention</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.11 Level of attitude among the respondents following intervention</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4.12 Level of practice among the respondents following intervention</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

Bacteria recovered from the hand can be divided into two categories; resident and transient. The resident flora tends to dominate under the superficial cells of the stratum corneum and can also be found on the surface of the epidermis, with *Staphylococcus epidermidis* being the dominant species. Among fungi, the commonest genus, would be *Pityrosporum* (*Malassezia*) spp. (Wilson, 2005). Resident flora are not known to cause infections on the skin. However they do cause infections on non-intact skin, sterile body cavities or the eyes (Lark *et al.*, 2001). Transient microorganisms acquired during contact with contaminated surface or environment typically colonize the superficial layer of the skin and do not usually multiply on the skin, but they survive and sporadically multiply on skin surface, and are more amenable to removal by routine hand hygiene (Kampf & Kramer, 2004).

With the development of vaccines and antimicrobial medications during the mid 20th century, in addition to control over the common infectious microbes such as tuberculosis and diphtheria, the significant practice of hygiene has faded. Rather, the focus of health concern has shifted to non-communicable diseases which are steadily increasing, while it is observed that the decline in hygiene is ever evident especially in the home and community. Advances in medicine and public health seemed, at one time, to extensively lighten the number of infectious diseases. Nonetheless, concerns for this and the need for prevention through home and community hygiene have steadily climbed back up the health agenda (Aiello *et al.*, 2007). According to Pinner *et al.* (1996) deaths
attributable to infectious disease increased by 22% in the United States (US) alone between the year 1980 and 1992, making up the third leading cause of death among US residents. This trend is largely attributed to two main factors: first, the constantly mutating nature and range of pathogens to which we are exposed and, secondly, the changes are occurring in the community, which affect the resistance to infection. Undetermined the extent of ignorance to hygiene practice, poor hand hygiene is a vital factor for many cases of gastrointestinal (GI), respiratory tract and skin infection which make up the biggest slice of the infectious disease burden (Aiello et al, 2007).

Hand hygiene according to the World Health Organization (2009), is a general term referring to any action of hand cleansing. This is done with the aim of physically or mechanically removing dirt, organic material and/or microorganisms. One of the important measures in preventing the spread of infection is generally considered to be hand washing. In a study conducted by Choi et al. (2007) to evaluate the public's awareness in Korea of the importance of hand washing, the result showed that a majority of 77.6% of the survey respondents were aware of the significance of hand washing in preventing communicable diseases, however 39.6% of the respondents failed to do so, as they claimed to not be accustomed to washing their hands and 30.2% found washing their hands to be bothersome. Being cognizant to the lack of knowledge, negligence of attitude and practice of the community, our group will conduct an interventional research by handing out questionnaires which aim to determine, compare, and verify the knowledge, attitude and practice of the community in relation with hand washing practice. Subsequently, from the results analyzed, numerous interventions will be conducted to establish correct knowledge, attitude and practice of the community towards hand hygiene.
1.2 Problem Statement

Hand washing is one of the most important factors for the prevention of disease transmission. In community setting, proper hand washing helps to protect people against food-borne disease like viral gastroenteritis, air-borne disease, for example influenza and disease transmitted through direct physical contact such as impetigo, and hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD).

According to The Global Public-Private Partnership for Hand Washing with Soap (PPPHW, 2009), “Hand washing with soap is the single most cost-effective health intervention”. It is evidenced because a $3.35 investment in hand washing brings the similar health benefits as an $11.00 investment in latrine construction, a $200.00 investment in household water supply, and an investment of thousands of dollars in immunization (PPPHW, 2009). Investments in the promotion of hand washing with soap can also maximize the health benefits of investments in water supply and sanitation infrastructure. Moreover, the cost of providing inpatient care for childhood rotavirus gastroenteritis in Malaysia was estimated to be US$1.8 million yearly. Cost is not typically an obstacle to hand washing promotion as almost all households in the world already have soap although it is commonly used for other purposes, for example, laundry rather than for hand washing.

Although these diseases are preventable with hand washing, the Third National Health and Morbidity Survey still show that the incidence of acute diarrhea in Sarawak is 5.6% which was higher than the national (Malaysia) incidence of 5.0% (Institute for Public Health (IPH), 2008). Furthermore, from 1997 until 2006, Sarawak had experienced a 3 yearly pattern outbreak of Hand Foot Mouth Disease (HFMD), and Sibu was the most affected division (Sarawak Health Department, 2006). Early 2012, an outbreak of HFMD had occurred and the highest number of cases was 757 cases reported during 4th to 10th March 2012 in Sarawak. Up till 24th June 2012, there were 8270 cases of HFMD in Sarawak and among those cases, 437 are reported from Sibu.
However, Sibu was not the worst division affected in this outbreak (Sarawak Health Department, 2012).

If hand washing can be practiced, there will be a reduction of these diseases as shown in studies by Curtis & Cairncross (2003), and Luby et al. (2004) that respectively concluded that washing hands with soap were associated with a decrease in risk of diarrheal disease of 47% and more than 50% reduction of the number of pneumonia-related infections in children under the age of five year-old when hand washing with soap is practiced. However, the observed rate of hand washing with soap at critical moments was only up till 34 percent around the world and the suggested major reason was hand washing is not the habit in community around the world (PPPHW, 2009). According to Niffenegger (1997), hand washing helped to reduce colds at the test child care center where frequent and proper hand washing practices were incorporated into the curriculum through a hand washing intervention programme. According to Arnaud et al. (1993), the childrens' hand washing skills did improve after the hand washing teaching programme. The children had fewer visits to the doctor, took fewer prescribed antibiotics, and had fewer infectious illnesses than they did for the same time period the previous year. However, other variables, in addition to the teaching programme may have contributed to the outcome.

This study would be done in the community setting as most of the intervention studies took place in childcare centers or school (63%) rather than community settings (37%). Majority of the intervention studies were conducted among younger age groups (≤ 5 years), which was 59% if compared to age group more than five year-old, which was 41% (Aiello et al. 2008). While there is much discussion and research done on about how to improve hand washing habits in healthcare settings, the importance of hand washing in household or community setting, particularly in developing countries, receives scant attention (Curtis et al. 2003). Thus, it is hoped that this study can give an insight about the knowledge, attitude and practice of hand washing among community setting in the adult respondents in Stapang I.
1.3 Significance of the Study

The Ministry of Health (MOH) had commenced hand hygiene campaign since 2006. This campaign comprised the hospital, schools, food and beverages outlets and public places such as commuters and front liners. Hand hygiene becomes more important following the spread of pandemic Influenza A 2009 (H1N1) virus globally including Malaysia. Up to September 2010, there were 12210 cases of H1N1 and 92 deaths had been recorded. Hand food mouth disease (HFMD), tuberculosis and food poisoning are other common diseases related to improper practice of hand hygiene. The campaign had been carried out widely in hospital, schools and restaurants but not in community level. In community level, this research is carried out to examine the extent of awareness on hand hygiene particularly in hand washing practice among rural residents in Stapang 1. It is also designed to assess the knowledge, attitude and practice of the community on hand washing and educate them about the common diseases through interventions so that early prevention and treatment can be achieved.

In a study done by Halder et al. (2010) in rural Bangladesh, hand cleanliness among caretakers and children were associated with economic status and availability of water at hand washing locations. Therefore, it is necessary to determine whether the compliance of hand washing is influenced by characteristics of socio-demographic and availability of the facilities or otherwise. Besides this socio-demographic and water supply availability, other factor such as soap usage and availability of washing stand in the study location also contribute to the hand washing compliance. This is supported by the result form the research above, Halder et al. (2010) found that rinsing hands with water only was more common compared to the washed both hands with soap at critical moments or key hand washing times. Hence, this research is important to enhance the community knowledge, attitude and practice on hand washing in-related with facilities availability.
1.4 Objectives of Study

1.4.1 General Objective

This research aims to study knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP) of hand washing in Stapang I community and to evaluate their changes of KAP on hand washing after the health intervention.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

1.4.2.1 identify the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents;
1.4.2.2 assess the respondent’s levels of KAP on hand washing;
1.4.2.3 determine the relationship between KAP of hand washing and the socio-demographic characteristics of Stapang I respondents;
1.4.2.4 determine the relationship between KAP and hand washing compliance;
1.4.2.5 determine the relationship between hand washing compliance and the availability of hand washing facilities in the community; and
1.4.2.6 evaluate the changes of KAP on hand washing among the respondents after the health intervention.
1.5 Research Questions

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1.5.1 What are the socio-demographic characteristics of the Stapang 1 community?
1.5.2 What are the levels of KAP on hand washing among the study population?
1.5.3 What are the relationship between knowledge, attitude and practice on hand washing?

1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be put forward in this study:

1.6.1 The respondents who have good KAP on hand washing are likely to comply with the procedure.
1.6.2 The score of knowledge, attitude, and practice correlate with each other.
1.6.3 The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents are likely to influence the KAP on hand washing.
1.6.4 The respondents are likely to be compliant with hand washing, if the facilities are available in the community.
1.6.5 The respondent’s KAP on hand washing is likely to improve after the relevant health intervention program.
1.7 List of Variables

1.7.1 Independent Variables

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Ethnic group
- Highest educational level
- Occupation
- Household income
- Facilities availability (water, soap, washing stand)

1.7.2 Dependent Variables

- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Practice
1.8 Conceptual Framework

Socio-demographic factors:
- Age
- Gender
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Education level
- Income
- Occupation

Facilities:
- Water supply
- Washing stand
- Soap

Knowledge -------> Attitude

Practice

Knowledge ↔ Attitude

Practice
1.9 Operational Definitions

1.9.1 Hand washing practice:

The habit of cleansing the hands with water and soap or other detergent, for the purpose of removing dirt or microorganisms.

1.9.2 Infectious disease:

An illness transmissible (as from person to person) by direct contact with an affected individual or the individual's discharges or by indirect means (as by a vector).

1.9.3 Knowledge:

Information and skills acquired through experience or education, the theoretical or practical understanding of hand washing practiced at home.

1.9.4 Attitude:

A settled way of thinking or feeling, typically reflected in a person's behaviour towards hand washing practiced in community setting.

1.9.5 Practice:

Application of hand washing in community setting.