The Theory and Practice of Habit Formation: Handwashing Applications

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Panel Participants

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Handwashing with Soap at Critical Junctures
(Before food handling and after fecal contact)

• What do we need to track?
• Does it last?
• For how long?
• What makes it last?
• What are the programmatic implications?
Types of Sustainability

- **Institutional**: Can local partners continue to implement behavior change programs once a donor-funded program ends?

- **Individual**: Is a newly adopted behavior practiced correctly and consistently over time?
Evidence May Be Inconclusive

- Different programs
- Different measurements
- Different concerns
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<td><strong>Design</strong></td>
<td>Quasi experimental Intervention vs control, 5 years after WASH project ended</td>
<td>Randomized control trial Revisiting intervention vs control households after 18 months of 9-month intervention promoting HW and POU</td>
<td>Randomized control trial Intervention vs control 6 weeks, 6 months and 12 months after the intervention</td>
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<td><strong>Indicators</strong></td>
<td>• Bacteria in left and right hands through hand rinses • Connection between handwashing and health</td>
<td>• HW technique (use of soap, dual hand rub, lather, towel dry) • Dedicated place for HW with supplies • Amount of soap purchased • Diarrhea prevalence</td>
<td>Observed handwashing practices of all family members aggregated at the village level. Indicator is # of critical juncture events where handwashing was observed over the # of all critical events observed.</td>
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<td><strong>Finding</strong></td>
<td>Cleaner hands in intervention group but no connection between HW practice and health.</td>
<td>Better handwashing technique and prevalence of dedicated HW place with supplies in intervention area. But not sufficient soap and no diarrheal disease prevalence difference between study groups.</td>
<td>Observed handwashing was statistically higher in intervention villages at 6 weeks and 6 months, but not at 12 months. Observed handwashing continue to increase in intervention villages even 6 months after the intervention.</td>
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<td><strong>So?</strong></td>
<td><strong>It lasts</strong> because there are sustainable services.</td>
<td><strong>It does not last.</strong> If no increase in soap purchases, no increase in soap use, no proper handwashing and no difference in health outcomes.</td>
<td><strong>It may last.</strong> Use of emotional drivers to promote handwashing is effective in initiating practice. Increase in practice at 6 month interval may be due to reactivity or measurement bias. Delayed intervention effects may be hypothetically due to changes in social norms.</td>
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## Reflective and ‘Reflexive’ Processes in Behavior Initiation and Maintenance: Key Determinants

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<th>Behavior Change</th>
<th>Initiation Determinants</th>
<th>Maintenance Determinants</th>
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<td>Reflective</td>
<td>Attitudes, social norms, self-efficacy, intentions</td>
<td>Satisfaction with behavior change</td>
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<td>Automatic ('Reflexive')</td>
<td>Implicit attitudes Behavior primes</td>
<td>Habits</td>
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