

Causes of Jaundice and Skin Rashes Amongst Children in Selected Rural Communities in the Gambia

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Abstract : The research is on the occurrence of certain diseases among children in rural and far-flung parts of the Gambia and the extent to which they are caused by lack of access to clean water. A baseline survey was used to discover, describe, and explain the actual processes. The paper explains the purpose of the research, which is majorly to improve the health condition of children, especially those living in rural communities. The paper also gives a brief overview of the socio-economic situation of The Gambia, emphasizing its status as a Least Developed Country (LDC) and the majority of its population living below the poverty line, with women and children hardest hit. The research used as case studies of two rural communities in the Gambia - Basse Dampha Kunda Village and Foni Besse. Data was collected through oral interviews and medical tests conducted among people in both villages, with an emphasis on children. The demographic detail of those tested is tabulated for a clearer understanding. The results were compared, revealing that skin rashes, hepatitis, and certain other diseases are more prevalent in communities lacking access to safe drinking water. These results were also presented in a tabular form. The study established how some policy failures and neglect on the part of the Government of The Gambia are imperiling the health of many rural dwellers in the country, the most glaring being that the research team was unable to test water samples collected from the two communities, as there are no laboratory reagents for testing water anywhere in The Gambia. Many rural communities lack basic amenities, especially clean and potable water, as well as health facilities. The study findings also highlighted the need for healthcare providers and medical NGOs to voice the plight of rural dwellers and collaborate with the government to set up health facilities in rural areas of The Gambia.

Keywords : jaundice, skin rashes, children, rural communities, the Gambia, causes

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