

Abstract

Research questions & Objectives: Which kinds of hand washing and hygiene information are positively evaluated and preferred by women and men in their public toilet areas (e.g. risk likelihood, infection severity, social norms, technique etc.)? Should messages be framed as a gain or a loss? Which format (text vs. pictorial vs. both) is more salient?

Design and Methods: Mixed methods are employed. Implicit evaluations towards hand hygiene messages (pictorial and textual) are investigated in a series of experiments and the subjective meaning of these messages for hand-washing activity is explored using Q-sorts.

Analyses: Experimental protocols have been created for the evaluation of hygiene messages using response time measures with student participants (n=120). In the main studies (generally of mixed factorial designs, N per study = 100), the protocols will be combined with additional Q-sorts. Together, this will yield a rich implicit-explicit attitudinal data set comprising non-conscious positive-negative evaluations towards the hand hygiene messages along with their multidimensional subjective meanings for both women and men.

Discussion: Evidence shows there are higher rates of hand washing in public toilets where there is signage compared to none at all. And, certain kinds of textual message content are likely to be differentially effective for women and men. It is envisaged that this research work in progress, through combining implicit evaluation measures with subjective meanings of hand hygiene signage, will provide a firm empirical basis for developing targeted hand hygiene messages to go forward into a planned community level intervention study.