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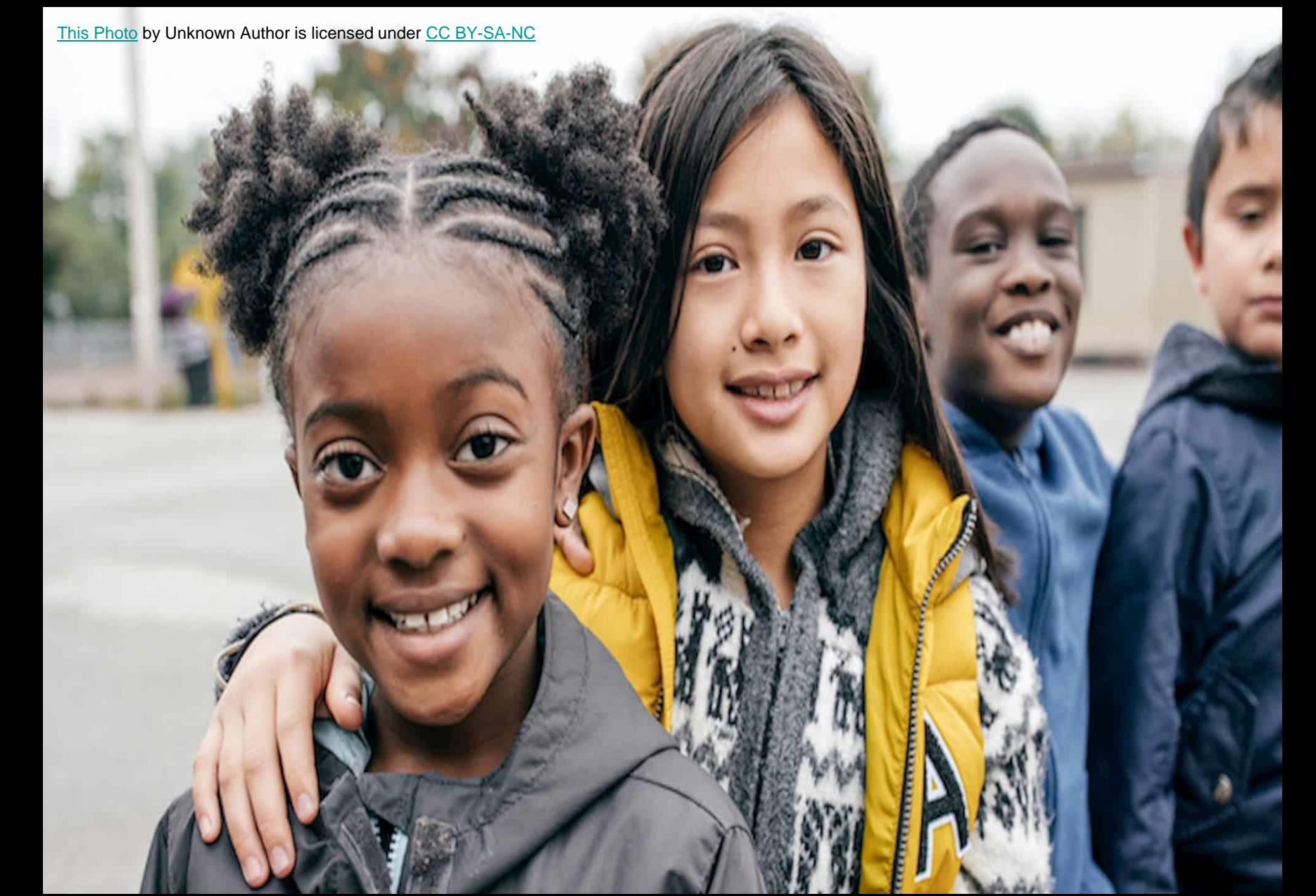
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Effects of Hand Washing Interventions

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Literature Review

Due to knowledge deficits in school-aged children on hand washing, infection transmission in schools has led to increased illness-related absenteeism around the world. The absenteeism leads to academic deficits resulting in gaps in education for young students. It is important that we investigate interventions and evaluative measures in order to educate school-aged children about infection prevention in our communities.

Category 1: “Interventions Used in School Settings”

Many different interventions are used in schools and can lead to a decrease in school sickness absenteeism. The focus of each article highlights various types of interventions such as educational programs that improve awareness and effectiveness of infection prevention. Implementation of interventions are important to continue in future studies because the more interventions that have been shown to decrease the likelihood of infections spreading, the better the chances are that students continue to attend school.

Category 2: “Evaluation of Interventions

Many studies have shown that illness related absences are an issue in all parts of the world, and likely in your community as well. There was an evaluative process that looked at various interventions. The evaluation was based on how the interventions affected academic performance, absenteeism, and overall community health. It is important to recognize the different trends that illness related absences in schools can show the general population. Examples of this are academic deficits, community-based influenza trends, infection precautions, and common knowledge about the most successful hand washing techniques.

Research Question

Does an educational intervention program on infectious precautions decrease absentee rates in schools?



Hypothesis

Marin County schools will have a reduction in illness related absentee rates after proposing hand hygiene interventions.

Our Proposal for Future Prevention

The study will consist of interventions such as a questionnaire, an education plan for infection prevention, a hand hygiene program that explains hand-washing tips, and posters for the students.

Participants

Participants will include grades K-1st in various Marin County school districts. Each grade level will have a control group of 22-24 students and an intervention group of 22-24 students.

Materials

Educational stimuli used in the study will include posters, YouTube videos, and a short evaluative questionnaire. The Center for Disease Control posters provided to the students. Figure 1 depicts how to wash your hands. Figure 2 analyzes when students should wash their hands at school.

Procedure

The proposed controlled study design will have participants learn a curriculum that discusses infection prevention and proper hand hygiene during their fall semester. Furthermore, students will respond to a hand hygiene and infection prevention questionnaire that evaluates effectiveness after learning the proposed curriculum. For the first month, the study will focus on observation of all students before implementation to assess their daily regimen. Then, the hand washing education plan will be provided to the experimental group for two months. Participants in the control group will continue to carry out their normal hand-washing practices for the course of the study. The data will be collected by reviewing the answers to the questionnaire, observing how long the students wash their hands for, and reviewing attendance records provided by the schools. The data will then be compared between both groups to evaluate if the hand washing program decreased sickness-related absenteeism.

Conclusions

- Our literature review showed that no matter where in the world you live, in areas with some of the most successful schools, school sickness absenteeism is a problem.
- Nursing implications such as cultural competence and access to resources should be taken into consideration when teaching an infection prevention curriculum for low-income students.
- It is important to consider that age-appropriate teaching methods is required for different grade levels because students may not be as attentive.
- We have concluded that there is clinical significance in using interventions to improve hand hygiene in schools to decrease absentee rates and decrease communicable diseases in the classroom.
- Gaps identified in the current research were that there are studies being conducted proving that hand health interventions are found to be beneficial in reducing school sickness, yet it has not become evidence-based practice in schools or at home.

We Want Change

We further seek to make the change in Marin County schools to encourage surrounding communities to implement a similar regimen and assist in decreasing illness related absenteeism, but it starts with infection precautions and prevention. This proposal has the opportunity to be an impactful study because this issue has been identified in many different parts of the world, but very little is being done to prevent communicable diseases in schools.



Figure 1. Wash Your Hands! CDC, 2023



Figure 2. Know When to Wash Your Hands at School. CDC, 2023