

4<sup>th</sup> World Congress on

# Infection Prevention and Control

November 28-29, 2016 Valencia, Spain

## Public awareness of hand hygiene as a simple measure in the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases: A systematic literature review

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Hygiene-related communicable diseases result in millions of deaths each year across the globe. Good hand hygiene practice is recognized as one of the most effective methods in preventing the spread of hygiene-related communicable diseases from person to person. Most of the studies carried out on hand hygiene practice and compliance has focused on the healthcare sector and has found that compliance is often poor. Few studies have looked at the public's knowledge and awareness of good hand hygiene as a simple measure in the prevention of the spread of communicable diseases. This study is a systematic review of peer-reviewed, published studies that focused on hand hygiene knowledge and compliance by the general public. An online search of the SCOPUS database using the keywords "hand hygiene", "hand washing", "public" and "knowledge" with exclusion criteria keywords "healthcare", "hospital" and "nursing", yielded 270 initial document results ranging from 1981 to 2016. From these 38 were included in the final review. The majority of the studies were carried out in less-developed countries particularly in Africa and the Middle-East. Schools and colleges emerged as the predominant locations used for most of the studies followed by food businesses. The systematic review concludes that there is a gap between knowledge and practice. Good education and tailored interventions were identified as key factors in improving hand hygiene practice and compliance within a target population, however further research is needed to determine the lasting impact.

### Biography

Aaron Lawson is a graduate of Ulster University with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health and the Diploma of Professional Practice with commendation. He has a keen interest and understanding of environmental health, particularly in relation to public health, health and safety in the workplace and creating a better environment for the future. He is currently undertaking PhD in Public Health and Epidemiology at Ulster University.

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