Development and delivery of the Faces of Dignity face washing intervention for the Stronger-SAFE trachoma trial

Katie Greenland1, Claire Collin2, Merebet Guye3, Demitu Legesse4, Asanti Ahmed Mure5, Nasir Kedir Koji3, Edao Sinba2, Wondu Alemayehu1, Aida Abashaw1, Oumer Shafi Abdurahman1,2, Hirpha Miecha1, Gemechu Shumi Bejiga1, Alexandra Czerniewska1,5, Sanita Dodson1,6, Virginia Sarah1,7, Anthony Solomon1, David Madcleod1, Anna Last1, Matthew Burton1

1 LSHTM, London, UK; 2 The Fred Hollows Foundation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; 3 Berhan Public Health & Eye Care Consultancy, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; 4 Oromia Regional Health Bureau, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; 5 The Fred Hollows Foundation Australia; 6 The Fred Hollows Foundation, London, UK; 7 World Health Organization, Geneva

Trachoma & the Stronger-SAFE Trial

- Trachoma is an eye disease caused by Chlamydia trachomatis (CT) bacteria
- Stronger-SAFE is a four-arm cluster-randomised trial to test whether enhanced azithromycin treatment (two doses, two weeks apart) combined with targeted transmission-interrupting strategies (face washing and fly control) can more effectively eliminate trachoma than current approaches.
- The trial is taking place in the West Arsi Zone in rural Oromia, Ethiopia.

Face washing Theory of Change

Theory of Change

1. Use information from preliminary studies to define target behaviour
2. Choose “umbrella” concept to tie intervention content together
3. Select Behaviour Change Techniques to address multiple behavioural factors
4. Develop intervention content iteratively, according to creative brief
5. Create final Theory of Change for the intervention

Activities (Behaviour Change Techniques)

- Faces of Dignity Drama
  - Present scenario: Prompt identification of parents as role models
- Pledge & Testimonials
  - Prompt public commitment; inform about others’ approval; provide a positive group identity resulting from target behaviour
- Wash station use & maintenance
  - Provide instruction; prompt guided practice; demonstrate & model behaviour; organise social support; feedback on performance
- Soap use Emo-Demos
  - Persuasive BCT based on disgust
- Water Perceptions & soapy water
  - Prompt: soaping with barriers; provide instruction; demonstrate behaviour

Intermediate Outcomes (Behavioural Factors)

- Understand target behaviour: People face washing with soap is important and linked to dignity (Information, Attitudes)
- Percieve expectancy from community & family to maintain clean faces and dignity of self and family. Accept responsibility for hygiene of young children. (Norms: personal importance, others’ approval)
- Functioning wash station is consistently available & accessible (particularly pre-school). Hands are washed thoroughly with soap. It is dry, all year around. (Ability: how to do, knowledge, confidence, self-regulation, action control)
- Percieve discharge as disgusting. Understand face washing with soap removes visible discharge. Percieve soap use to be important (Information, Atitudes)

Outcomes

- Faces, (and family of all household)
  - CT transmission is via faces, fingers, fomites & flies

Impact

- Reduction prevalence of Ocular Ct among children 1-9 years
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Preliminary Studies

- Chlamydia trachomatis mapping study
  - Ct-positive extra-ocular (purple) swabs suggest Ct transmission is via faces, fingers, fomites & flies

Formative research: seasonality and behaviour

- Overnight observation for 27 hrs in three seasons reveals faces are mainly washed in the morning, without soap

Intervention Development

1. Feb-Apr 2022, with dry & rainy season reinforcement (2022 & 2023).
2. Delivery to 1664 households in 34 “clusters”.
3. Process evaluation: implementation records & unannounced “spot checks” of delivery; participant exit interviews, FGDs.
   - My family cannot wash our faces with soap because it uses too much water: 73.5% control, 35.3% intervention; P<0.001.
4. Outcomes evaluation: structured observation of face washing behaviour in 68 clusters at 3 months and 36 months.
5. The trial is ongoing.

Intervention Delivery

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Pilot study: face washing & soap use

- Soap removes ocular discharge from children’s faces more effectively than just water

Community Event (N=124)
- Family Forum 1 (SoS) (N=309)
- Family Forum 2 (SoS) (N=311)
- House Call 1 (N=1495)
- House Call 2 (N=1491)
- Seasonal Events (100sHHS, dry & rainy season)

Trials

- SAFE Trial 1
  - Arsi, 6th zone in rural Oromia, Ethiopia.
  - Harvest Time
  - June 2019 to December 2019
  - Evaluation studies
- SAFE Trial 2
  - Arsi, 6th zone in rural Oromia, Ethiopia.
  - Harvest Time
  - February 2020 to January 2021
  - Evaluation studies
- SAFE Trial 3
  - Arsi, 6th zone in rural Oromia, Ethiopia.
  - Harvest Time
  - February 2020 to January 2021
  - Evaluation studies
- SAFE Trial 4
  - Arsi, 6th zone in rural Oromia, Ethiopia.
  - Harvest Time
  - February 2020 to January 2021
  - Evaluation studies
- SAFE Trial 5
  - Arsi, 6th zone in rural Oromia, Ethiopia.
  - Harvest Time
  - February 2020 to January 2021
  - Evaluation studies

Faces of Dignity

“Clean face is attractive, it’s also dignifying.”