



**THE TWELFTH ANNUAL ACADEMIC SESSIONS  
OF THE  
COLLEGE OF COMMUNITY PHYSICIANS  
OF SRI LANKA**

**21<sup>ST</sup>-23<sup>RD</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007**



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✓ **OP19**

**Introduction of a Safe Water System (SWS) in a tsunami affected community in Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka**

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**Introduction:** The SWS is an intervention that employs simple, robust, and inexpensive technologies to make drinking water safe at the point of use through disinfection and safe storage.

**Objective:** To introduce a safe water system using household chlorination and washing of hands with soap in the community.

**Methods:** A commercially prepared solution of 0.9% sodium hypochlorite ('Chlovathura') in 130ml plastic bottles and a 20 liter plastic container with a narrow mouth and a lid was provided free of charge. Trained community assistants distributed and promoted the use of the SWS using interpersonal communication methods. Hand washing using soap was promoted simultaneously. Surveys were conducted at baseline (n=452), six months (n=100) and 18 months (n=200) post-intervention to assess use.

**Results:** All were aware of the product 'Chlovathura' by six months of its introduction. Of those who were aware of the product, 49% (n=98) correctly described how it should be used at baseline and this percentage improved to 75% (n=149) post-intervention. When stored water at household level was tested for chlorine, it was present in the specified concentration in 6% (n=26), 27% (n=27) and 34% (n=67) at baseline, six months and 18 months respectively.

The incidence of a diarrhoeal episode within the past two weeks among children under 5 years in the sample reduced to 4.8% (n=4) at 18 months from 5.4% (n=8) at baseline ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Conclusion:** The SWS was accepted and correctly practised by more than one third of the target population. The SWS can be promoted in other areas with remote access to safe drinking water and may be a solution to reduce the morbidity due to diarrhoeal diseases in the country.