

STIMULATING PUPILS TO LEARN ABOUT PERSONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

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Abstract.

Hygiene refers to the set of practices perceived by a community to be associated with the preservation of health and healthy living. While in modern medical sciences there are a set of standards of hygiene recommended for different situations, what is considered hygienic or not can vary between different cultures, genders and age groups. Some regular hygienically practices may be considered good habits by a society while the neglect of hygiene can be considered disgusting, disrespectful or even threatening – these are aspects of daily life that must be taught to children.

Key words: hygiene, pupils, rural, urban, education

INTRODUCTION

Today's public is very much aware of the environment and its effect on the health and comfort of human beings. In the context of the environment, hygiene may best be described as those practices that are conducive to providing a healthy environment. Basically, this includes the following three areas of concern: safety (which has already been addressed), environmental comfort and stimuli, and finally infection control (which will be discussed under "Pathogenic Organism Control").

The health care provider has certain responsibilities to control the facility's general environment as well as the patient's immediate surroundings.

Environmental hygiene includes activities aimed at improving or maintaining the standard of basic environmental conditions affecting the well being of people, including: clean and safe water supply, clean and safe ambient air, efficient and safe animal, human, and industrial waste disposal, protection of food from biological and chemical contaminants, and adequate housing in clean and safe surroundings.

Personal hygiene is the first step to good grooming and good health. Elementary cleanliness is common knowledge. Neglect causes problems that you may not even be aware of. Some problems may not be your fault at all, but improving standards of hygiene will control these conditions.

Environmental and personal hygiene in everyday life settings plays an important part in preventing spread of infectious diseases.

Children should be taught the importance of hygiene as early as possible, even if it turns out not to be very easy.

Yet teaching children good hygiene habits is definitely worth the effort. Aside from keeping up appearances and not offending others, it's important for children to learn lifelong habits of good hygiene to keep them healthy and prevent the spread of common illnesses.

Singing songs or making a game out of the activities will help to ensure that they enjoy learning and looking after themselves.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ministry of Public Health organized a nationwide Campaign to Promote Norms of Personal and Environmental Hygiene. At county level, the campaign was organized by the Bihor Public Health Department and developed in partnership with the County School Inspectorate, between January 9 and April 7, 2009. The information and educational material with specific content was presented by teachers.

The study analyses and seeks ways in which children can be encouraged to adopt measures of personal hygiene and environmental hygiene. The study is targeted on children in 1st to 4th grade, aged between 6 and 10 years, from schools throughout the county of Bihor.

Children were asked to follow along with parents and under the supervision of the teachers, a movie about hygiene. Children's reactions were analyzed by teachers who were asked to make suggestions as to how children might be more interesting about learning hygiene habits.

The study includes 67 schools, involving 781 teachers and 11,298 pupils. The teachers' suggestions have been done in writing, after which they were accumulated and analyzed.

RESULTS

Out of the 69 schools that we took in account for the study, 19 were from urban areas, mainly Oradea. (fig.1.). From a total of 761 classrooms, most of them were located in the rural area: 518 classrooms (68.06%) compared to a number of 243 classrooms from towns (31.94%)

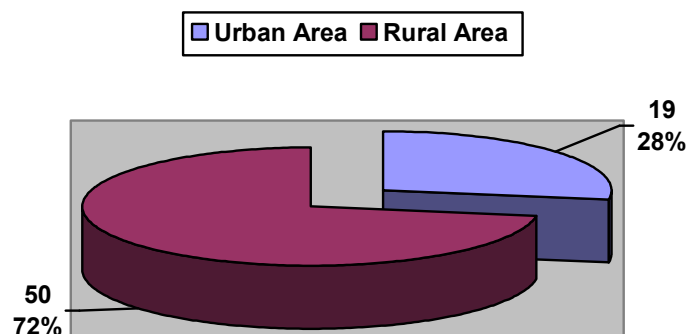


Fig.1. Provenance area

Numerical distribution of teachers and pupils on the environmental origins, it is shown in Figure 2. We attempted an equidistant evaluation of urban and rural pupils, through their roughly equal numbers (5460 pupils from urban area and 5838 pupils from rural area)

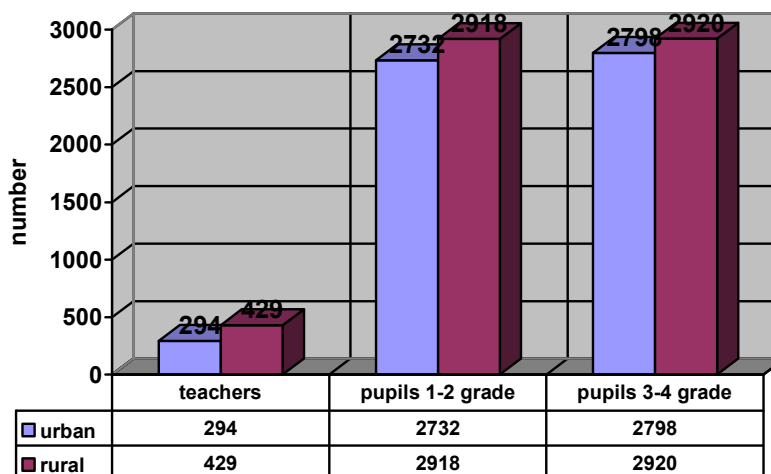


Fig.2. Distribution of teachers and pupils regarding the provenance area

The time allocated for these activities was a total of 1002 hours for all 761 classes, which means an average of 1 hour and 20 minutes devoted to educating children about personal hygiene and environmental hygiene.

There was a difference between rural and urban areas related to the time allocated to this activity; such presentations lasted 1 hour/class in rural areas and 3 hours/class in urban areas. (Fig. 3)

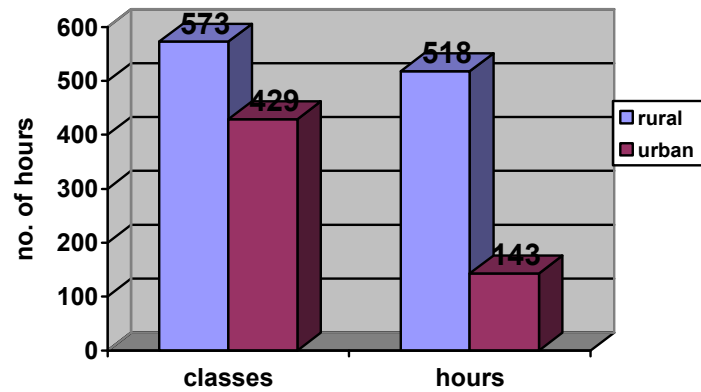


Fig.3. Number of hours dedicated for hygiene teaching

After viewing the film by pupils and parents, teachers made the following series of observations and remarks, as shown in fig. 4.

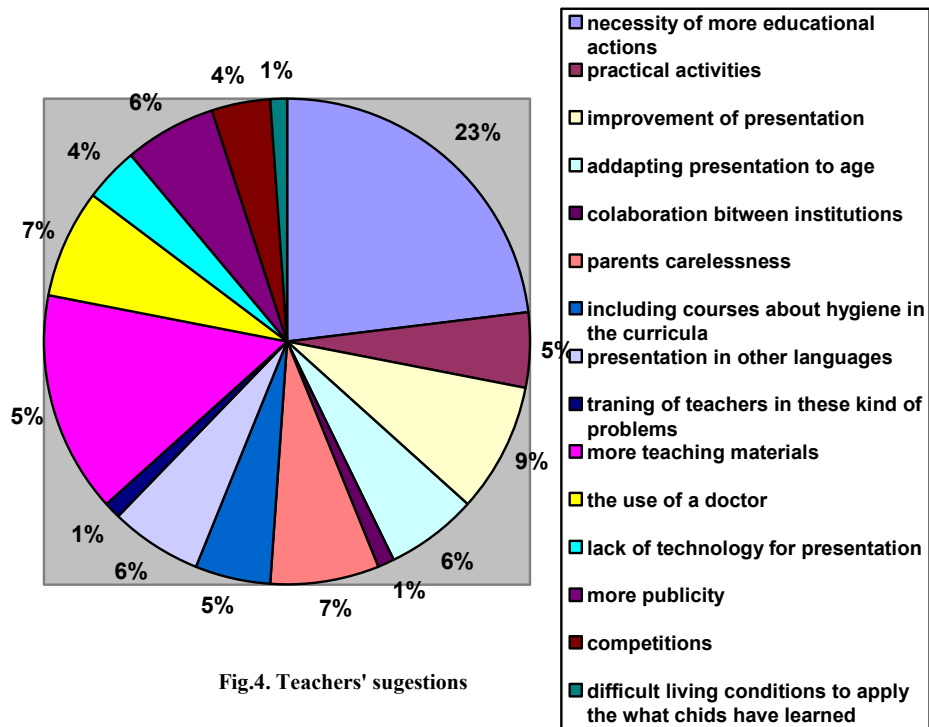


Fig.4. Teachers' sugestions

Regarding the disinterest of parents that teachers have noted, it is highlighted by the participation of parents in this program (Fig. 5): only 10840 parents have participated, compared to a total of 11298 pupils.

While in towns parents seem to be more evolved in the process of their kids' educations, in the rural area there is a lack of interest.

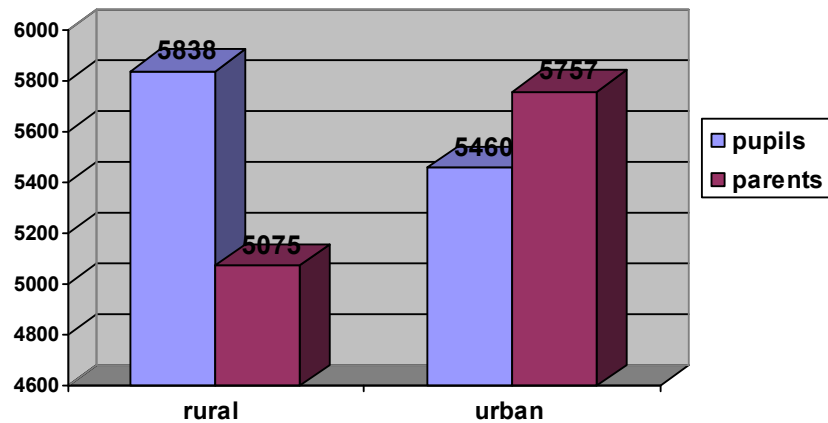


Fig. 5. Number of parents compared with number of pupils

CONCLUSIONS

Education for personal hygiene and environmental hygiene should be initiated by young age. The introduction of such subjects in school curricula would facilitate learning the rules of hygiene.

Incidental learning is not sufficient and it requires the participation of medical professionals.

Children in rural areas have access to information more difficult, time allocated to educational programs about environmental and health hygiene is limited and there is a lack of necessary technology.

An important factor in stimulating pupils is the participation of parents, who sometimes show disinterest.

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