



Role of the Environment in Healthy Skin

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Overcrowding



- Poverty and overcrowded living conditions are major contributing factors to the spread of scabies infestations.
- Poverty may also lead to other problems such as poor nutritional status resulting in reduced immunity and consequently heightened levels of infection.

What about dogs?



- Scabies mites are host specific.
- Scabies mites from dogs don't reproduce on humans.
- Exposure to infected dogs may cause infestations in humans but they are self limiting.



Role of Fomites



- Role of fomites is controversial.
- In optimum conditions scabies mites can survive 2-3 days off a human host.
- In cases of ordinary scabies fomites are unlikely to play a major role in transmission
- Risk of transmission from fomites will be greater if householder has crusted scabies.

Treatment of Fomites



- Clothing and linen can be decontaminated by washing at temps $> 60^{\circ}\text{C}$ or tumble dried.
- Items can also be decontaminated by removing from body contact for at least 72hrs.
- Houses should be vacuumed or well swept and mopped.
- Mattresses can be treated using 'fly spray' type insecticides containing pyrethroids.

Hygiene



- Research suggests that personal hygiene is not a factor in the spread of scabies.
- However good personal hygiene can help limit the skin infections which may follow scabies infestations.
- RCT in Pakistan found a 34% lower incidence of pyoderma in children who lived in households with hand washing promotion and soap (Luby et al).

What is EH doing?



- In 2014 three new television commercials were developed in conjunction with Menzies School of Health Research.
- The new TVCs are designed to encourage parents/carers of young children to prompt/show children how and when to wash their hands and faces.





Gerry the Germ Lightbox – a fun way to demonstrate handwashing



Point of sale materials to prompt people to buy soap

Healthy Community Assessment Tool



- The Healthy Community Assessment Tool (HCAT) was developed by Dr Liz McDonald of Menzies School of Health Research.
- HCAT was designed to determine how well remote and rural community environments support healthy living.
- In 2015 the Environmental Health Branch partnered with The Fred Hollows Foundation to trial HCAT on 7 Aboriginal Communities including tailoring tool for use by EH practitioners.

HCAT Domains



Water Supply	Electricity Supply
Sewerage System	Animal Management
Air Quality	Healthy Housing
Solid Waste Management	Food Supply
Community Drainage and Roads	Community Vibrancy and Pride
Footpaths, Cyclepaths, Street Lighting and Public Toilets	Promoting Physical Activity

Where to from here?



- Development of HCAT Database.
- Engaging trial communities in the development of Community Environmental Health Action plans.
- Partnering with University of South Australia to trial HCAT User Guide and staged rollout of HCAT.