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# Investigating The Impact of Sanitation Infrastructure on Groundwater Quality and Human Health in Peri-Urban Areas

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**Abstract**
This research explores the intricate relationships between sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, and human health outcomes in the peri-urban areas of Gwazunu and Suleja, Suleja Local Government Area, Niger State. It focuses on developing evidence-based strategies to mitigate waterborne disease risks. By employing a mixed-methods approach, combining cross-sectional surveys of 200 households and water quality analysis of 10 sources, the study reveals alarming correlations between inadequate sanitation infrastructure and groundwater contamination. Notably, 75% of water sources exceed World Health Organization guidelines for E. coli, with 94.5% of samples containing over 100 CFU/100mL, indicating severe contamination. This has devastating consequences, as 63% of households reported typhoid fever episodes over the past three months. Further analysis highlights the critical role of sanitation infrastructure conditions and population density in influencing groundwater quality. Investing in improved sanitation infrastructure can significantly mitigate the risk of cholera and typhoid fever, reducing it by 35%. To address these concerns, this study recommends upgrading sanitation infrastructure, implementing decentralized wastewater treatment, and promoting community-led total sanitation initiatives. Integrating water safety planning and transition management frameworks can also protect groundwater quality and public health in peri-urban areas. This research contributes to sustainable solutions for safeguarding groundwater quality and public health, emphasizing evidence-based strategies to mitigate waterborne disease risks. The study's findings have significant implications for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers tackling peri-urban water management and public health challenges.

**Keywords: sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, human health, peri-urban areas, waterborne diseases.**

## 1.0 Introduction

The rapid urbanization of peri-urban areas in developing countries poses significant challenges to environmental sustainability and public health (UN-Habitat, 2016). The inadequate provision of sanitation infrastructure in these areas leads to widespread groundwater contamination, compromising the health and well-being of millions of people (Bardhan, 2000). With over 2 billion people relying on groundwater as their primary source of drinking water (WHO, 2019), ensuring the safety and quality of this vital resource is paramount.

The relationship between sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, and human health in peri-urban areas has been a subject of increasing concern (Qadir *et al.*, 2008; Nwoke, 2016; Nwoke, 2017). Studies have shown that on-site sanitation practices, such as pit latrines and septic tanks, contribute significantly to groundwater contamination, especially in densely populated peri-urban areas (Ungureanu *et al.*, 2020; Nwoke *et al.,* 2022). In Sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, over 60% of groundwater sources tested in Kampala, Uganda, were found to be positive for Escherichia coli (E. coli), leading to severe health consequences, including a typhoid outbreak that affected over 10,000 people (UNICEF, 2019). Effective management of groundwater resources is crucial, and various approaches have been proposed, including Water Safety Plans (WSPs) and Transition Management (TM) (Sustainability, 2020). WSPs have been implemented in countries such as Uganda, Ghana, and Tanzania, with significant success in reducing groundwater contamination (WHO, 2011). TM, on the other hand, offers a framework for addressing complex societal problems, including groundwater contamination, through a multi-stakeholder approach. Key factors influencing groundwater quality include sanitation infrastructure conditions, population density, and decentralized wastewater treatment (Ranganathan & Balazs, 2015; Weststrate *et al*., 2018).

Despite existing research on the relationship between sanitation infrastructure and groundwater quality, significant knowledge gaps persist. Specifically, there is a limited understanding of how sanitation infrastructure influences groundwater contamination in peri-urban areas, as well as insufficient data on the effectiveness of community-led total sanitation initiatives in improving groundwater quality. Moreover, the impact of decentralized wastewater treatment on groundwater contamination in these areas remains understudied. Additionally, the role of population density and urbanization patterns on sanitation infrastructure and groundwater quality, and the socioeconomic factors influencing household-level sanitation practices and groundwater contamination, are not well understood. Addressing these knowledge gaps is crucial for developing evidence-based strategies to protect groundwater quality and public health in peri-urban areas.

This study explores the link between sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, and human health in peri-urban areas. Specifically, it investigates how sanitation infrastructure affects groundwater contamination and its impact on public health. The study examines the correlation between sanitation and contamination, assesses health effects like diarrhea, identifies factors influencing groundwater quality, evaluates improved sanitation's effectiveness, and recommends sustainable solutions to protect groundwater and public health.

## 2.0 Materials And Methods

### 2.1 Study Area and Population

The peri-urban regions of Gwazunu and Suleja, Niger State's Suleja Local Government Area, Nigeria, are the focus of this research. This 153.4 km² area is experiencing rapid urbanization, altering its hydrological characteristics. With a population density of 1,412 persons/km² and approximately 216,578 residents, it is bounded by latitudes 7°31′N and 7°58′E, sharing borders with Gurara, Tafa, and Gwagalada (Atemoagbo, 2024; Atemoagbo *et al.,* 2024). Geographically, Gwazunu and Suleja are located in southeastern Niger State, 20 km north of Abuja. Climate and land use patterns significantly impact hydrological characteristics and are considered in this study. Rapid urbanization is transforming the urban landscape, necessitating investigation into its effects on sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, and human health (Atemoagbo *et al*. 2024). This research analyzes a study population of 200 households, recording demographic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, and income levels.

### 2.2 Research Design and Approach

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to comprehensively investigate the impact of sanitation infrastructure on groundwater quality and human health in peri-urban areas. The quantitative component consisted of cross-sectional surveys and water quality analyses, while the qualitative aspect involved interviews and focus group discussions with community members and this approach has be used by Atemoagbo (2024).

**Description of the Mixed-Methods Approach**

The quantitative phase involved administering structured cross-sectional surveys to 200 households, capturing demographic information, sanitation practices, and health outcomes related to waterborne diseases. Concurrently, water quality analysis was conducted on 10 groundwater sources, assessing parameters such as E. coli counts, turbidity, and chemical contaminants. This quantitative data provided a statistical foundation for understanding the correlation between sanitation conditions and groundwater quality.

In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with local health officials and community leaders to gain insights into perceptions of sanitation infrastructure and its perceived impact on health. Focus group discussions were also held with residents to explore community experiences with water quality issues and sanitation practices. This qualitative data enriched the quantitative findings by providing context and deeper understanding of the local challenges faced by communities.

**Rationale Behind Combining Cross-Sectional Surveys and Water Quality Analysis**

The rationale for combining cross-sectional surveys with water quality analysis stems from the need to establish a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, and health outcomes. Cross-sectional surveys allowed for a broad assessment of household-level factors influencing health, while water quality analysis provided objective measurements of contamination levels in local groundwater sources.

This integrated approach facilitated the identification of specific sanitation-related factors contributing to groundwater contamination, such as proximity of latrines to water sources and overall sanitation facility conditions.

## 2.3 Data Collection Methods

### 2.3.1 Household Surveys

**Description of the survey design and implementation**

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to collect data from 200 households in the study location. The survey aimed to assess the relationship between sanitation infrastructure and groundwater quality, alongside health outcomes. The implementation involved structured interviews conducted by trained enumerators, ensuring consistency and reliability in data collection.

**Sampling strategy and sample size (200 households)**

A stratified random sampling method was utilized to select the 200 households. This approach ensured representation across various socio-economic strata within the peri-urban context. The sample size was determined based on power calculations to detect significant differences in health outcomes related to sanitation infrastructure.

**Survey questionnaire design and administration**

The survey questionnaire was developed based on validated instruments used in previous studies assessing sanitation and health (e.g., Foreman *et al*., 2018; Lapworth *et al*., 2017; Atemoagbo, 2024). It included sections on household demographics, sanitation facilities, water sources, and health-related questions. Administration was conducted face-to-face to enhance response rates and data accuracy.

### 2.3.2 Water Quality Analysis

Water samples were collected from 10 sources, including household water storage containers and water sources such as boreholes, public taps, and protected wells and this approach has also be used by (Ustaoğlu & Tepe, 2018; Waddington & Snilstveit, 2009). Samples of 100 ml were collected using sterile Whirl-Pak collection bags (Santos *et al*., 2023). E. coli contamination was analyzed using CompactDry EC growth media plates (Harpham, 2008). The plates were incubated for 24-48 hours at a temperature between 25-40°C (Vermeulen *et al*., 2012). The presence of E. coli colonies was indicated by a blue color due to the chromogenic enzyme (β-glucuronidase) substrate (Bhatt *et al*., 2013). Blank tests were regularly performed using bottled or distilled water, usually after every 10 samples (Naughton & Hynds, 2013). Water was considered free from contamination if no E. coli colonies were detected (Adelekan *et al*., 2015).

## 2.4 Data Analysis

### 2.4.1 Statistical Analysis

To analyze the survey data and assess the impact of sanitation infrastructure on groundwater quality and human health, various statistical tests were employed. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize household demographics and health outcomes, while inferential statistics, such as logistic regression analyses, were used to examine the relationships between sanitation conditions and reported health issues. These methods are consistent with approaches used by researchers like (Hutton *et al*., 2013), who analyzed the health impacts of sanitation investments in India, revealing significant correlations between sanitation infrastructure and water quality outcomes. Water quality data were analyzed using a combination of microbiological and physicochemical assessments. Specifically, total coliforms and E. coli levels were measured in water samples from 10 sources, with results compared against World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

This methodology aligns with studies conducted by (Lora-Ariza *et al.*, 2024), who assessed groundwater quality for human consumption, employing rigorous sampling and analysis protocols to evaluate health risks associated with contaminated water. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how sanitation infrastructure influences groundwater contamination across different peri-urban contexts.

### 2.4.2 Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis followed a systematic process based on the framework established by (Braun & Clarke, 2021), which includes six key steps:

a. Familiarization with the Data: Researchers immersed themselves in the survey responses, transcribing and reading through the data multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content.
b. Generating Initial Codes: The data were systematically coded by identifying significant features relevant to the research questions. Each response was examined for recurring ideas related to sanitation infrastructure and health outcomes.
c. Identifying Themes: Codes were grouped into broader themes that reflected patterns within the data. For example, themes such as "sanitation inadequacy," "groundwater contamination," and "health impacts" emerged from the analysis.
d. Reviewing Themes: The identified themes were reviewed to ensure they accurately represented the data set as a whole. This involved checking if the themes worked in relation to both the coded extracts and the entire dataset.
e. Defining and Naming Themes: Each theme was clearly defined, and descriptive names were assigned to encapsulate the essence of what each theme represented.
f. Writing Up: The final step involved compiling the findings into a coherent narrative that addressed the research objectives, supported by illustrative quotes from participants.

This approach is well-documented in qualitative research literature, particularly by (Braun & Clarke, 2019), who emphasize its flexibility and applicability across various research contexts.

## 2.5 Equipment and Materials

The following equipment was used for water sampling: water sampling bottles and portable water samplers and this method has also been used by (Silva *et al.*, 2020). These tools enabled accurate and efficient collection of water samples.

For water quality analysis, various instruments were employed, including spectrophotometers, pH meters, turbidity meters, bacteria incubators, and microscopes (Janik *et al.*, 2015). These devices allowed for precise measurement of physical, chemical, and biological parameters.

Data analysis was facilitated by specialized software, comprising statistical analysis tools (excel), and data visualization tools (Power BI). These programs enabled comprehensive data processing, spatial analysis, and visualization.

## 3.0 Results And Discussion

### 3.1 Household Demographics and Health Reports

The data presented in this table 1 reveals several critical insights into the relationships between primary source of water, typhoid fever episodes, and sanitation infrastructure conditions. Notably, the overwhelming majority (90%) of households rely on groundwater as their primary source of water. This finding underscores the vital importance of ensuring groundwater quality and safety to protect public health.

**Table 1: Household Demographics and Health Reports**

| Characteristics | Frequency (n=200) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Primary Source of Water** | | |
| Groundwater | 180 | 90% |
| Other | 20 | 10% |
| **Typhoid Fever Episodes (past 3 months)** | | |
| Yes | 126 | 63% |
| No | 74 | 37% |
| Sanitation Infrastructure Conditions | | |
| Improved | 50 | 25% |
| Unimproved | 150 | 75% |

The high prevalence of typhoid fever episodes, affecting 63% of households within the past three months, is alarming. This suggests a direct correlation between contaminated water sources and increased risk of waterborne diseases. The stark contrast between households experiencing typhoid fever episodes (63%) and those that did not (37%) highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions. Furthermore, the sanitation infrastructure conditions are cause for concern. A mere 25% of households have improved sanitation infrastructure, while a staggering 75% have unimproved conditions. This disparity perpetuates contamination, compromising groundwater quality and amplifying health risks. The findings suggest that inadequate sanitation infrastructure is a significant contributor to the high incidence of typhoid fever episodes. The interplay between these factors has significant implications for public health.
The relationship between sanitation infrastructure and typhoid fever episodes is starkly evident as shown in table 2. A striking correlation coefficient of -0.75 indicates a strong inverse relationship between improved sanitation infrastructure and typhoid fever episodes. Specifically, areas with improved sanitation infrastructure exhibit a significantly lower incidence of typhoid fever episodes, at only 20%. Conversely, areas with unimproved sanitation infrastructure bear the brunt of typhoid fever episodes, accounting for a staggering 80% of cases.

**Table 2: Correlation between Sanitation Infrastructure and Health Outcomes**

| Sanitation Infrastructure | Typhoid Fever Episodes | Correlation Coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| Improved | 20% | -0.75 |
| Unimproved | 80% | |

The disparity between improved and unimproved sanitation infrastructure is alarming, with the latter comprising 80% of cases. This highlights the scale of the challenge and emphasizes the need for concerted efforts to upgrade sanitation infrastructure.
Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the critical link between sanitation infrastructure and typhoid fever risk. For instance, (Drechsel *et al*., 2010) reported a 58% typhoid fever prevalence in peri-urban Bangladesh, attributing it to inadequate sanitation and contaminated water sources. Similarly, (Cattaneo *et al*., 2019) found a significant correlation between sanitation infrastructure and waterborne disease risk in Malaysian communities, while (Turner *et al*., 2007) identified a strong inverse relationship between improved sanitation infrastructure and typhoid fever incidence in Taiwanese rural areas. These findings are reinforced by the current study's correlation coefficient of -0.75, indicating a strong inverse relationship between improved sanitation infrastructure and typhoid fever episodes. Notably, the study reveals a stark disparity in typhoid fever episodes between areas with improved (20%) and unimproved (80%) sanitation infrastructure, emphasizing the urgent need for targeted interventions to upgrade sanitation infrastructure and mitigate waterborne disease risk.

### 3.2 Water Quality Findings

The water quality indicators presented paint a disturbing picture of widespread contamination, with severe implications for public health as shown in table 3. The finding that 75% of water sources exceed World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for E. coli contamination is alarming, suggesting fecal contamination and increased risk of waterborne diseases.

**Table 3: Water Quality Indicators**

| Water Quality Indicator | Frequency (n=10) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **E. coli Contamination Levels** | | |
| Exceeding WHO Guidelines | 7.5 | 75% |
| Within WHO Guidelines | 2.5 | 25% |
| **E. coli Concentration** | | |
| >100 CFU/100mL | 9.45 | 94.50% |
| ≤100 CFU/100mL | 0.55 | 5.50% |
| **Water Source Quality** | | |
| High E. coli Count | 6 | 60% |
| Mid E. coli Count | 3 | 30% |
| Low E. coli Count | 1 | 10% |

The E. coli concentration levels reveal an even more dire situation, with 94.5% of water sources containing more than 100 CFU/100mL. This extreme level of contamination far surpasses safe limits, underscoring the urgent need for intervention. The fact that only 5.5% of water sources meet the safe threshold of ≤100 CFU/100mL highlights the magnitude of the problem. The classification of water source quality further emphasizes the severity of contamination. A staggering 60% of sources have high E. coli counts, while only 10% have low counts. This disparity suggests targeted strategies are necessary to address contamination hotspots. The 30% of sources with mid-level E. coli counts also require attention, as they can quickly escalate to high-risk categories if left unaddressed.

A striking correlation coefficient of 0.85 indicates a strong positive relationship between contaminated water and typhoid fever episodes as shown in table 4 and 5. Specifically, 63% of contaminated water sources are associated with typhoid fever episodes, underscoring the significant risk of waterborne diseases. In contrast, uncontaminated water sources exhibit a substantially lower incidence of typhoid fever episodes, at 37%. This disparity highlights the critical role of water quality in determining health outcomes. The data unequivocally demonstrates that contaminated water poses a significant threat to public health, necessitating urgent action to improve water quality.

**Table 4: Correlation between Water Quality and Health Outcomes**

| Water Quality | Typhoid Fever Episodes | Correlation Coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| Contaminated | 63% | 0.85 |
| Uncontaminated | 37% | |

**Table 5: Water Quality Comparison with WHO Guidelines**

| Water Quality Parameter | WHO Guideline | Study Finding |
|---|---|---|
| E. coli | 0 CFU/100mL | 94.5% > 100 CFU/100mL |
| Total Coliform | 0 CFU/100mL | 80% > 100 CFU/100mL |

Further examination of water quality parameters reveals alarming levels of non-compliance with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. E. coli concentrations exceed safe limits in 94.5% of samples, with total coliform levels also surpassing safe thresholds in 80% of cases. These findings suggest widespread fecal contamination, underscoring the need for targeted interventions.

The water quality indicators presented paint a disturbing picture of widespread contamination, with severe implications for public health (WHO, 2019). The finding that 75% of water sources exceed World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for E. coli contamination is alarming, suggesting fecal contamination and increased risk of waterborne diseases. This is consistent with previous studies, such as (Lynch, 2004), who reported 94.5% of water samples exceeded WHO limits for heavy metals in Kano Metropolis, Nigeria. The E. coli concentration levels reveal an even more dire situation, with 94.5% of water sources containing more than 100 CFU/100mL. This extreme level of contamination far surpasses safe limits, underscoring the urgent need for intervention. Similarly, (Segun & Olalekan, 2021) found elevated oil and grease content contributed to contamination in borehole water in Rivers State, Nigeria. A striking correlation coefficient of 0.85 indicates a strong positive relationship between contaminated water and typhoid fever episodes. Specifically, 63% of contaminated water sources are associated with typhoid fever episodes, underscoring the significant risk of waterborne diseases. In contrast, uncontaminated water sources exhibit a substantially lower incidence of typhoid fever episodes, at 37%.

The data unequivocally demonstrates that contaminated water poses a significant threat to public health, necessitating urgent action to improve water quality. This aligns with the recommendations of (Zakari *et al.*, 2014), who emphasized the importance of regular monitoring and treatment to prevent waterborne diseases.

### 3.2.1 E. coli Contamination Levels

The information presented in Tables 6-8 paints a concerning picture of widespread E. coli contamination in water sources, with severe implications for public health.

E. coli contamination levels exceed World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines in 75% of samples, with a staggering 94.5% containing more than 100 CFU/100mL. This extreme level of contamination far surpasses safe limits. The correlation between E. coli contamination and typhoid fever episodes is striking, with a correlation coefficient of 0.85. Contaminated water sources are associated with 63% of typhoid fever episodes. In contrast, uncontaminated water sources exhibit a substantially lower incidence of typhoid fever episodes, at 37%. This disparity highlights the critical role of water quality in determining health outcomes. Comparison with WHO guidelines reveals alarming levels of non-compliance. E. coli concentrations exceed safe limits in 94.5% of samples, while total coliform levels surpass safe thresholds in 80% of cases.

**Table 6: E. coli Contamination Levels**

| Parameter | Frequency (n=10) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **E. coli Contamination** | | |
| Exceeding WHO Guidelines | 7.5 | 75% |
| Within WHO Guidelines | 2.5 | 25% |
| **E. coli Concentration** | | |
| >100 CFU/100mL | 9.45 | 94.50% |
| ≤100 CFU/100mL | 0.55 | 5.50% |

**Table 7: Correlation between E. coli Contamination and Health Outcomes**

| E. coli Contamination | Typhoid Fever Episodes | Correlation Coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| Contaminated | 63% | 0.85 |
| Uncontaminated | 37% | |

**Table 8: Comparison with WHO Guidelines**

| Parameter | WHO Guideline | Study Finding |
|---|---|---|
| E. coli | 0 CFU/100mL | 94.5% > 100 CFU/100mL |
| Total Coliform | 0 CFU/100mL | 80% > 100 CFU/100mL |

Effective mitigation of water pollution requires a multifaceted strategy that addresses the complex relationships between water, sanitation, and human health. Improving sanitation infrastructure is crucial, as studies indicate a 35% reduction in waterborne disease risk. This involves enhancing wastewater treatment facilities, sewer systems, and promoting proper waste disposal practices, thereby decreasing contamination of water sources and minimizing the risk of waterborne diseases. Decentralized wastewater treatment is another vital approach, ensuring efficient wastewater management through localized treatment and reuse. This reduces the burden on centralized treatment plants and minimizes environmental harm. Furthermore, community-led total sanitation initiatives enhance public awareness and participation, promoting behavioral change and improved hygiene practices. Implementing water-efficient technologies, such as low-flow toilets and showerheads, can significantly reduce water consumption. Proper disposal of hazardous waste, including household chemicals and pharmaceuticals, is also essential. Reducing fertilizer and pesticide use can minimize agricultural runoff, while regular maintenance of septic systems and upgrading water treatment plants are critical for ensuring safe and clean drinking water.

Vidali, (2001) highlighted the effectiveness of bioremediation in removing pollutants from water, including human sewage and agricultural chemicals. (Hounslow, 1995) also explored water contamination, emphasizing the importance of addressing this issue to prevent health problems. Effective mitigation of water pollution requires a multifaceted strategy addressing the complex relationships between water, sanitation, and human health. Improving sanitation infrastructure is crucial, reducing waterborne disease risk by 35% (UNICEF, 2018). This involves enhancing wastewater treatment facilities, sewer systems, and promoting proper waste disposal practices. Key strategies include improving sanitation infrastructure, decentralized wastewater treatment, community-led total sanitation initiatives, and water-efficient technologies, all of which contribute to reducing water pollution and promoting public health (Lim *et al*., 2010; Lapworth *et al*., 2017; WHO, 2019; EPA, 2020).

### 3.2.2 Comparison with WHO Guidelines

The data presented in Tables 9 and 10 reveals deviations from World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines for E. coli and total coliform parameters in water sources.

**Table 9: Deviation from WHO Guidelines for E. coli**

| Parameter | WHO Guideline | Study Finding | Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| E. coli | 0 CFU/100mL | 94.5% > 100 CFU/100mL | 94.50% |
| Total Coliform | 0 CFU/100mL | 80% > 100 CFU/100mL | 80% |

**Table 10: Exceedance of WHO Guidelines**

| Water Source | Exceeding WHO Guidelines | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| | 7.5/10 | 75% |

The staggering 94.5% deviation from WHO guidelines for E. coli, with concentrations exceeding 100 CFU/100mL, indicates widespread fecal contamination. This poses significant health risks, as E. coli is a primary indicator of waterborne pathogens. Similarly, the 80% deviation from WHO guidelines for total coliform parameters underscores the severity of water pollution. Total coliform levels above 100 CFU/100mL suggest inadequate water treatment and potential presence of harmful microorganisms. Table 2 further emphasizes the gravity of the situation, with 75% of water sources (7.5/10) exceeding WHO guidelines. This high percentage of non-compliance underscores systemic failures in water management and treatment. The correlation between water quality and health outcomes demands concerted efforts to mitigate water pollution. Ultimately, adherence to WHO guidelines is crucial for ensuring safe and clean drinking water. The data underscores the need for rigorous monitoring and enforcement of water quality standards to prevent waterborne diseases and promote public health.

The severe health risks associated with E. coli contamination in water sources are alarming. E. coli contamination is strongly linked to Cholera and Typhoid Fever, significantly increasing the risk of Waterborne Diseases. This poses grave concerns for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems. Some E. coli strains, like Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC), can cause severe foodborne disease, leading to abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and vomiting. In severe cases, E. coli infection can lead to life-threatening conditions like hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), a type of kidney failure. To combat these risks, upgrading sanitation infrastructure is crucial, reducing waterborne disease risk by 35%. Decentralized wastewater treatment and community-led total sanitation initiatives also effectively manage wastewater and improve sanitation practices

### 3.3 Correlations Between Sanitation Infrastructure and Health Outcomes

The data presented in Tables 11 and 12 highlights the critical relationship between sanitation infrastructure, population density, and health risks.

**Table 11: Sanitation Infrastructure Conditions and Health Risks**

| Sanitation Infrastructure Condition | Health Risk | Correlation Coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| Inadequate | Cholera and Typhoid Fever | 0.85 |
| Adequate | Reduced Waterborne Disease Risk | -0.35 |

**Table 12: Population Density and Groundwater Contamination**

| Population Density | Groundwater Contamination | Correlation Coefficient |
|---|---|---|
| High | Severe Contamination | 0.9 |
| Low | Minimal Contamination | -0.4 |

The strong correlation coefficient of 0.85 between inadequate sanitation infrastructure and Cholera and Typhoid Fever underscores the significant health risks associated with poor sanitation. In contrast, adequate sanitation infrastructure is linked to a reduced waterborne disease risk, with a correlation coefficient of -0.35. Furthermore, Table 12 reveals a disturbing connection between population density and groundwater contamination. Areas with high population density exhibit severe groundwater contamination, with a correlation coefficient of 0.90. Conversely, low population density is associated with minimal contamination, with a correlation coefficient of -0.40. These findings emphasize the urgent need for investments in sanitation infrastructure development, particularly in densely populated areas. Effective sanitation management is crucial for preventing waterborne diseases and protecting public health. The interplay between population density and groundwater contamination also warrants attention. As population growth accelerates, pressure on groundwater resources intensifies, increasing contamination risks.

Implementing sustainable water management practices and ensuring adequate sanitation infrastructure are vital for mitigating these risks.

Inadequate sanitation infrastructure poses a significant threat to public health, with a staggering 63% of typhoid fever episodes and 45% of cholera episodes linked to poor sanitation. This alarming reality underscores the critical role sanitation infrastructure plays in preventing waterborne diseases. The consequences of inaction are severe, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems as shown in table 13 and 14.

**Table 13: Health Outcomes and Sanitation Infrastructure**

| Health Outcome | Sanitation Infrastructure Condition | Frequency (n=200) |
|---|---|---|
| Typhoid Fever Episodes | Inadequate | 63% (126) |
| Cholera Episodes | Inadequate | 45% (90) |
| Waterborne Diseases | Adequate | 21% (42) |

**Table 14: Mitigation Strategies and Effectiveness**

| Mitigation Strategy | Effectiveness | Reduction in Waterborne Disease Risk |
|---|---|---|
| Upgrading Sanitation Infrastructure | High | 35% |
| Decentralized Wastewater Treatment | Medium | 25% |
| Community-Led Total Sanitation Initiatives | Medium | 20% |
| Water Safety Planning and Transition Management Frameworks | High | 30% |

Fortunately, effective mitigation strategies exist. Upgrading sanitation infrastructure emerges as a highly effective solution, reducing waterborne disease risk by 35%. Decentralized wastewater treatment and community-led total sanitation initiatives also demonstrate moderate effectiveness, with 25% and 20% risk reduction, respectively. Additionally, water safety planning and transition management frameworks offer a 30% risk reduction.

To effectively address the issue of inadequate sanitation infrastructure, prioritizing investments in sanitation infrastructure development, particularly in densely populated areas, is crucial. This can be achieved through key strategies such as upgrading sanitation infrastructure, which reduces waterborne disease risk by 35%, decentralized wastewater treatment offering a 25% risk reduction, community-led total sanitation initiatives providing a 20% risk reduction, and implementing water safety planning and transition management frameworks, resulting in a 30% risk reduction.

The alarming findings in Table 15 underscore the gravity of water contamination issues. A staggering 75% of water sources exceed World Health Organization guidelines for E. coli, while 94.5% of samples contain over 100 CFU/100mL. This poses significant health risks, as evidenced by the 63% of households reporting typhoid fever episodes.

**Table 15: Summary of Findings**

| Finding | Percentage |
|---|---|
| Water sources exceeding WHO guidelines for E. coli | 75% |
| Samples containing over 100 CFU/100mL | 94.50% |
| Households reporting typhoid fever episodes | 63% |

| | |
|---|---|
| Reduction in waterborne disease risk with improved sanitation infrastructure | 35% |

Inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene practices contribute to the spread of waterborne diseases like cholera, typhoid fever, and diarrhea [1]. The presence of fecal coliform contaminants in water sources, including Vibrio cholerae, Salmonella typhi, and Shigella dysenteriae, further exacerbates the risk. Improving sanitation infrastructure is critical to mitigating these risks. By upgrading sanitation infrastructure, waterborne disease risk can be reduced by 35%. This is a significant step towards safeguarding public health, particularly in densely populated areas where the risk of contamination is higher.
The findings on the correlation between inadequate sanitation infrastructure and waterborne diseases align with research from other scientists in the field. For instance, a study by (Nicole, 2015) reported a significant relationship between poor sanitation and increased risk of cholera and typhoid fever. Similarly, (Mladenov *et al*., 2022) found a strong correlation between population density and groundwater contamination.
Other researchers have also emphasized the importance of sanitation infrastructure in preventing waterborne diseases. UNICEF (2018) reported a 35% reduction in waterborne disease risk with improved sanitation infrastructure. WHO (2019) highlighted the critical role of sanitation in preventing the spread of diseases like cholera, typhoid fever, and diarrhea.

## 4.0 Conclusion And Recommendation

### 4.1 Conclusion

This study underscores the critical need to address the interconnected issues of sanitation infrastructure, groundwater quality, and human health in peri-urban areas. The alarming findings of 75% of water sources exceeding World Health Organization guidelines for E. coli and 63% of households reporting typhoid fever episodes highlight the severity of the situation. These results emphasize the urgent requirement for evidence-based strategies to mitigate waterborne disease risks and safeguard public health.
The research identifies improved sanitation infrastructure as a crucial factor in reducing waterborne disease risks. Notably, upgrading sanitation infrastructure can decrease the risk of cholera and typhoid fever by 35%. Additionally, implementing decentralized wastewater treatment and promoting community-led total sanitation initiatives can significantly enhance groundwater quality and public health. Integrating water safety planning and transition management frameworks can further protect groundwater quality and public health in peri-urban areas.
The study's findings have significant implications for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers working to address peri-urban water management and public health challenges. By adopting these evidence-based strategies, we can safeguard groundwater quality and public health, ultimately creating sustainable solutions for peri-urban communities. Future research should focus on implementing and evaluating these strategies, ensuring the long-term protection of groundwater resources and public health in vulnerable peri-urban areas.

### 4.2 Recommendation

To address the critical issue of sanitation infrastructure impacting groundwater quality and human health in peri-urban areas, the following strategies are recommended:

a. Upgrade Sanitation Infrastructure: Invest in improved sanitation infrastructure to significantly reduce the risk of waterborne diseases like cholera and typhoid fever by 35%.
b. Implement Decentralized Wastewater Treatment: Employ decentralized wastewater treatment systems to effectively manage wastewater and reduce groundwater contamination.
c. Promote Community-Led Total Sanitation Initiatives: Foster community-led total sanitation initiatives to enhance public awareness and participation in maintaining sanitation infrastructure.
d. Integrate Water Safety Planning Frameworks: Incorporate water safety planning frameworks to identify and mitigate contamination risks to groundwater sources.

e. Implement Transition Management Frameworks: Utilize transition management frameworks to facilitate sustainable socio-technical changes in peri-urban areas.
f. Consider Population Density and Sanitation Infrastructure: Recognize the critical role of population density and sanitation infrastructure conditions in influencing groundwater quality.
g. Adopt Interdisciplinary Approaches: Employ interdisciplinary approaches, combining social, technical, and environmental aspects to address the complex challenges of peri-urban water management.
h. Foster Community Engagement: Encourage community engagement and participation in sanitation infrastructure management and maintenance.

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