

Press release

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Essity and WSSCC Hygiene and Health Report 2018-2019: Prioritizing hygiene and health is key to personal well-being and public progress

Today, Essity and United Nation's entity Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) launch the sixth edition of the Hygiene and Health Report. Hygiene and health are critical catalysts for solving several global societal issues stated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. With this report, Essity and WSSCC address opportunities and challenges throughout the human life cycle, highlighting new research, best practices and possible solutions. It shows the societal implications of prioritizing hygiene and health in decision making, whether by a policy maker, a care professional or an individual.

Drawing on insights and research from experts, academia, Essity and WSSCCs own experience as well as Essity's survey on hygiene and health of over 15,000 respondents worldwide, the report demonstrates how hygiene and health act as catalysts for solving several global societal issues:

- High absence rates in preschools and schools have a negative impact on the foundation for development, and put affected children at a disadvantage early in life. The impact of hygiene conditions in the environments of children is a global issue; according to our survey, 54% of parents say that their children refrain from using toilets in schools on a weekly basis and the top two countries are India and the US, with 76% and 68%, respectively. By implementing accessible hygiene facilities and promoting better hand hygiene, absence among preschoolers in a Swedish region with 1.7 million inhabitants was reduced by up to 13%. In addition to increasing school participation, the investment in hygiene and health also led to yearly productivity savings of USD 5.5 million, 10,000 fewer doctor visits and 3,000 fewer prescriptions for antibiotics.^[1]
- Girls and women not attending school or work due to menstruation has a severe impact on gender equality. 49% of women worldwide experience social discomfort during menstruation, and multiple studies show that women and girls around the world stay home from work and school during their period. By providing hygiene facilities adapted for women's needs and integrating menstruation management in policy work, we can increase women's workforce participation and create a path to women's empowerment.
- Living with incontinence can severely affect quality of life and dignity for the individual, as well as participation and contribution on a societal level. 400 million people suffer from incontinence globally, and with an ageing population

¹ Västra Götalandsregionen (2012), HYFS. Final report 2006-2012.

this figure is expected to increase further. By making incontinence care more focused on the individual and by benefiting from new innovative and purpose-driven solutions, patients can be empowered to lead a more dignified and qualitative life and remain a functioning member of society. For example, estimates of the benefits of improved incontinence care in the Netherlands show annual potential savings from a societal perspective of EUR 125 million.²

“As a leading global hygiene and health company, Essity has unique knowledge and insights to drive global dialogue about the strong connection between hygiene, health and well-being. We collaborate with partners using our different perspectives, competences and resources to raise awareness, develop standards and influence regulations in relation to health and hygiene,” says Magnus Groth, President and CEO of Essity.

“Hygiene and health are prerequisites and enablers for fulfilling many of the Sustainable Development Goals. We’re already seeing incredible progress towards the 2030 agenda, but there is still work to be done. Putting hygiene and health at the centre of the conversation means more emphasis on forgotten and taboo topics; it opens up possibilities for change that reaches far beyond just individuals, but to society as a whole. Hygiene is only the beginning.”, says Rolf Luyendijk, Executive Director at WSSCC.

About the collaboration between Essity and WSSCC:

Since 2014, Essity and WSSCC have partnered in the mission to encourage a global conversation about hygiene and health issues as well as opportunities across organizations, sectors, and countries. In 2016, we took the partnership further by jointly publishing the Hygiene Matters Report: Joining Forces for Progress. With this edition of the report, we are continuing our work. We offer new insights by combining research findings, statistical evidence, successful cases and testimonies from people whose voices are rarely heard. We also highlight solutions and actions that we identify as critical for improving hygiene and health standards across the globe and for every part of life’s course. Our ambition is to inspire and invite more players to join the dialogue and partnership and to help identify sustainable solutions going forward.

About the report:

This report is the latest edition in a series of reports that Essity has published since 2008 with the aim of raising awareness about the pivotal role that hygiene, sanitation, and health play in well-being and for individuals and communities, and to highlight solutions to some of the problems we face in these areas.

The report builds on a combination of third-party information and our own data. One data source is a global survey conducted between November 20 and December 4, 2017, through web panels in 15 different countries, collecting answers from a total of 15,530 respondents. National quotas have been used to obtain accurate representation of age and gender. Questions in the survey centered on hygiene and health concerns, public hygiene, personal hygiene, menstruation, incontinence, antibiotic resistance and sustainability.

Read the Hygiene and Health Report 2018-2019 [here](#)

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About Essity

Essity is a leading global hygiene and health company dedicated to improving well-being through our products and solutions, essentials for everyday life. The name Essity stems from the words essentials and necessities. Our sustainable business model creates value for people and nature. Sales are conducted in approximately 150 countries under the leading global brands TENA and Tork, and other strong brands, such as Jobst, Leukoplast, Libero, Libresse, Lotus, Nosotras, Saba, Tempo, Vinda and Zewa. Essity has about 48,000 employees and net sales in 2017 amounted to approximately SEK 109bn (EUR 11.3bn). The headquarters is located in Stockholm, Sweden, and the company is listed on Nasdaq Stockholm. More information at www.essity.com.

² Franken MG, Ramos Corro I, Los J, Al MJ, The increasing importance of a continence nurse specialist to improve outcomes and save costs of urinary incontinence care: an analysis of future policy scenarios, *BMC Family Practice* 2018:19:31