

Cholera outreach sessions findings

Introduction

Since September of 2022, parts of Syria have faced a major cholera outbreak, including the northeast and northwest.

Although the cause of the outbreak was initially linked to water pollution near the Euphrates River and severe water shortages in northern Syria, the disease has now spread throughout Syria, with the number of suspected cholera cases reaching nearly 11,000 and more than 300 confirmed cases in northwest Syria.

Therefore, civil society needs to be activated in response to community needs, such as the cholera pandemic, in the absence of concerned institutions. So, we decided “to ensure the health safety of targeted communities” to conduct an awareness campaign parallelly with the implementation of our project’s main activities about the correct ways and methods to avoid being infected by cholera and the best ways to deal with infected persons within our family or from the community.

Consequently, it was essential to conduct awareness sessions to ensure the health and safety of targeted communities. Thus, the facilitators were asked to conduct outreach sessions with their local communities. Each facilitator carried out one or two dialogue sessions targeting 8-12 people.

The targeted people were from the local communities. As a result, **40** sessions were conducted. The total number of participants in the outreach sessions was **473**.

General findings:

1. The main factors that led to the cholera epidemic spreading in northwest Syria were rapidly due to deteriorating hygiene and sanitation conditions, disruptions to the drinking water supply, and crops irrigated with wastewater.
2. The displaced camps are a suitable environment for the spreading of cholera infections for many reasons, such as the lack of sanitation services and high population density.
3. There is a lack of public awareness about the cholera illness and preventative measures among people, especially in camps.
4. The participants mentioned sanitation problems in camps areas, including water pollution through human waste and inadequate household rubbish disposal, triggering a cholera outbreak.
5. Due to ongoing war, the infrastructure, such as boreholes, spring sources, tanks, and wells consider the main source of providing clean drinking water to the local communities—unfortunately, most of these sources in suffering from a lack of cleaning and disinfection.

6. One of the factors that lead to the spreading of cholera is the proximity of sources of drinking water from the e sewage channels, which causes seepage of polluted water into groundwater, which can cause pollution and endanger sources of drinking water.

Recommendations:

1. The awareness campaigns should target the students and children in camps and schools as they consider the highest-risk group.
2. The municipalities have a duty and responsibility to provide and maintain water and sanitation services.
3. Participants from civil society have stressed the importance of supporting the infrastructure, such as boreholes, spring sources, tanks, and wells which need to be sterilized and cleaned constantly. In addition, the organizations that work in the WASH sector should focus on supporting such kinds of projects.
4. The concerned authorities should work on protecting drinking water sources that are threatened by pollution, especially wells and springs.
5. Workers in the medical sector should conduct medical seminars and post them on social media platforms in order to reach the biggest possible audience.
6. The organization should support volunteer teams and youth to implement community campaigns to spread awareness by distributing brochures and hygiene kits, especially in camps and poor areas.
7. The farmers should avoid irrigating the plants and crops with contaminated and unclean water, as crops can be contaminated with bacteria if they are watered with contaminated water.
8. To ensure that awareness campaigns reach all people, the mobile teams should organize awareness sessions for adults and children within the Cholera awareness sessions.
9. The concerned authorities and municipalities should impose severe penalties against the farmers who use contaminated and unclean water to irrigate the plants and crops.
10. As a part of the social responsibility of each one, everyone should have an obligation to act for the benefit of society by raising awareness and alert to illness.
11. Supporting community initiatives that aimed to raise awareness of cholera in the local communities.
12. The actors in the community should work on raising awareness during their meetings with the local community.
13. The medical organizations should work on ensuring the providing the cholera vaccine.

Survey analysis

During the outreach sessions, the facilitator shared a short online survey to measure the participants' knowledge about cholera and the prevention measures. The survey consists of 4 questions, and the answers were as follows:

ANSWERS

Respondents' knowledge of the most important symptoms of cholera

65% of respondents know the most important symptoms cholera.

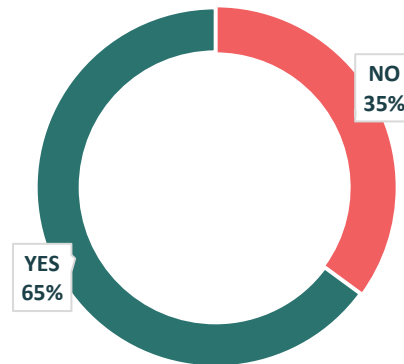


figure 1: Do you know the most important symptoms of cholera?

Respondents' answers varied about knowledge of cholera symptoms, as:

- 88% of respondents know Acute watery diarrhea symptom.
- 59% of respondents know dehydration symptom.
- 58% of respondents know vomiting symptom.
- 44% of respondents know general fatigue symptom.
- 9% of respondents know leg cramps symptom.
- 2% of respondents know other symptoms.

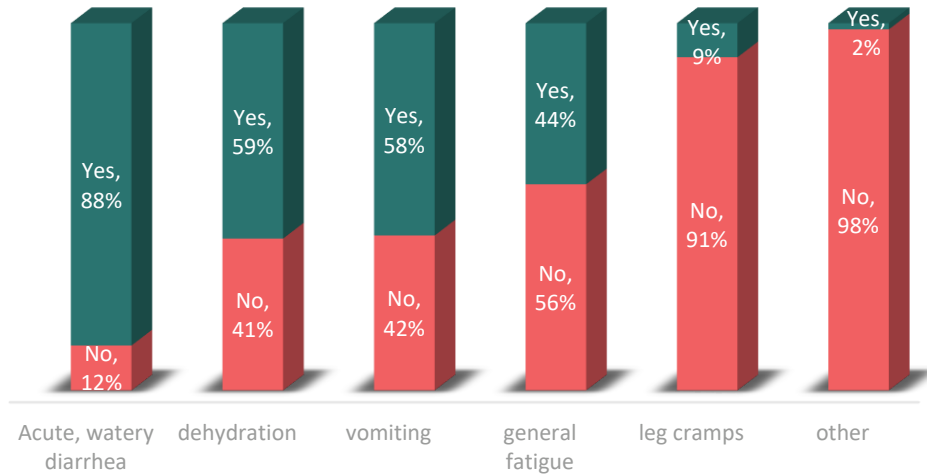


Figure2: % of Knowledge of the symptoms of cholera

Knowledge of the most important ways to prevent cholera

65% of respondents know the most important ways to prevent cholera.

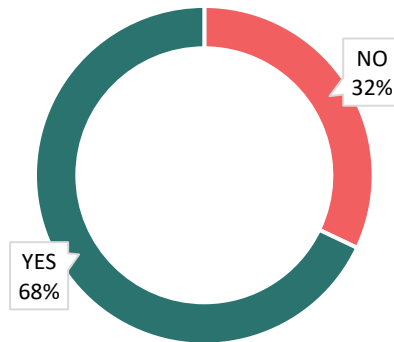


figure 3: Do you know the most important ways to prevent cholera?

Respondents' answers varied about knowledge of ways to prevent cholera, as:

- 73% of respondents know a way that Drinking clean water sterilized by boiling or chlorin.
- 72% of respondents know a way that Washing hands frequently using soap and water.
- 69% of respondents know a way that Using clean water to wash and prepare food.
- 52% of respondents know a way that Eating cooked foods and cover leftover food and reheat it before eating it again.
- 5% of respondents know other ways.

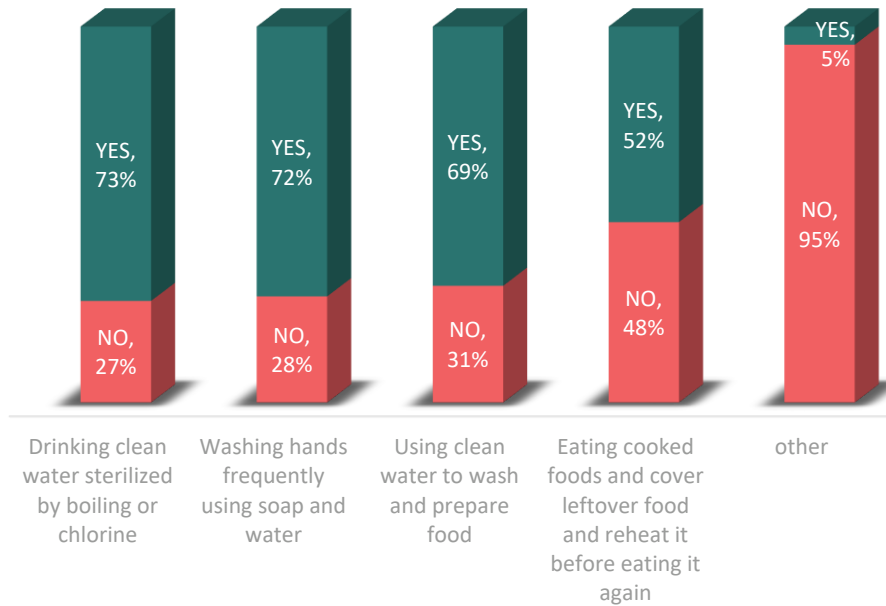


figure 4: Knowledge of the most important ways to prevent cholera

Knowing what to do if a person shows symptoms of cholera

59% of respondents know what to do if they show symptoms of cholera.

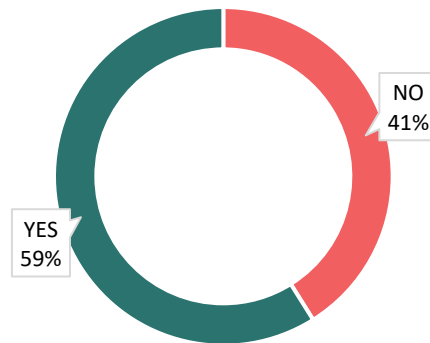


figure 5: Do you know what to do if you show symptoms of cholera?

Respondents' answers varied about knowledge what to do if they have cholera symptoms, as:

- 87% of respondents know that they should direct contact with a medical center.
- 40% of respondents know that they should Stop cooking and serving food to others.
- 18% of respondents know that they should Immediately starting with a replacement electrolyte solution.

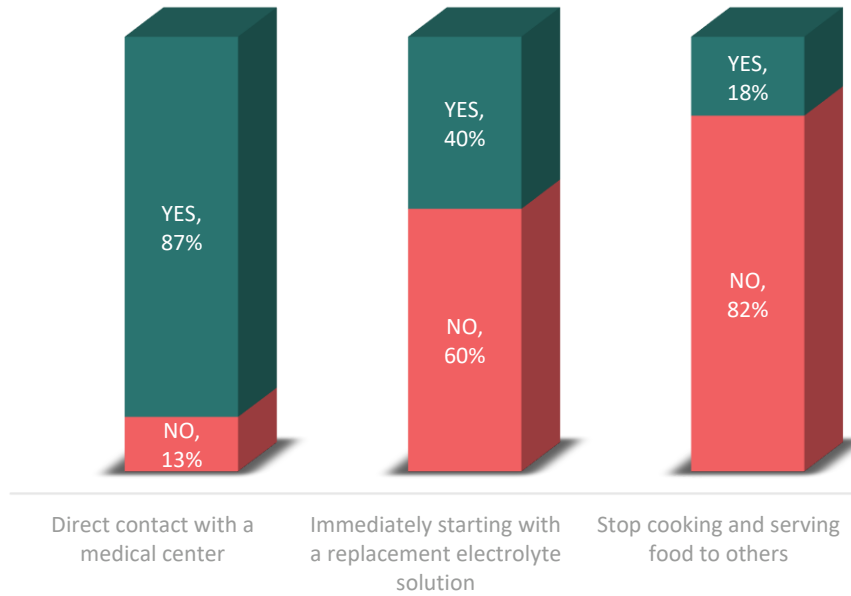


figure 6: What do you do if you have cholera symptoms?

Infection people with cholera in the vicinity of the respondent

86% of respondents don't know if there are people infection with cholera in the vicinity

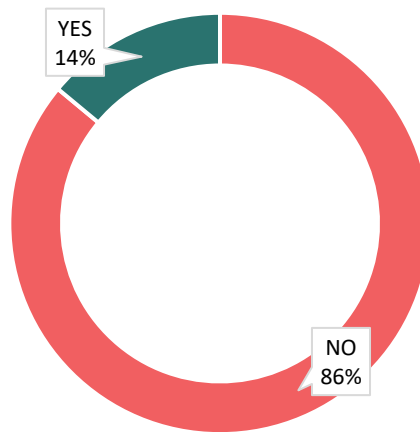


figure 7: Do you know any of your acquaintances or those around you who contracted cholera?