Recognition of Arsenic Contamination by Rural Bangladeshi People

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Arsenic contamination in ground water is a serious problem in Bangladesh. Urgent mitigation programs have been devised by many international organizations in order to resolve it. However, even if arsenic removal methods, effective medical treatments and a systematic mitigation program for arsenic poisoning are implemented, these will not work well without local peoples’ motivation to deal with the problem. Since local peoples’ recognition of and attitudes towards arsenic poisoning has scarcely been documented, this study was conducted using questionnaires to identify the specific problems and propose a mitigation program for dealing with arsenic contamination in rural communities. The results suggest that a strong motivation to cope with the problem is not shared by everyone living in the arsenic-contaminated community and that behavior in response to arsenic contamination is related to the socioeconomic attributes of the individuals. Since trained health assistants at the local health center were identified as the information resource most accessible to all of the people in a village, to raise the level of motivation of the people to deal with arsenic contamination, they should frequently make house-to-house visits or hold workshops in their village.