Environment and Human Health

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Abstract

The interaction between environment and human health is one that has been of concern to health specialists and stakeholders. Current paper focuses on the relationship between human health and the environment with particular reference to the health hazards posed by dumpsites.

*Keywords:* Environment, health hazard, dumpsite
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Introduction

Environmental health involves the intertwined issues relating to physical, chemical, and biological factors that may be external to an individual yet affecting human health and behavior. It involves analysis and assessment of environmental issues that affect human health. Current paper focuses on the health hazards that dumpsite poses to people who reside next to the sites.

Direct and Threats of Dumpsites to Human Health

The dumpsites are a threat to human health both directly and indirectly. Direct exposure to the health risks includes the fact that such dumpsites are breeding grounds for mosquitoes. The dumpsites have shallow and ponded water contained in the tires, ruts, metals and abundant food. These are agents of malarial transmission. The dumpsites thus renders populations vulnerable to malarial attacks resulting from the mosquitoes bred in the waste dumpsites.

The dumpsites have been associated with lung diseases and breathing complications and other air-borne diseases. This is mainly due to the polluted air around the dumpsites that spreads to the surrounding environment (Hunter, 1997). The air around the dumpsites is polluted by human waste, rotten hard metals among other hazardous wastes that affect the health of residents in the areas surrounding the dumpsites. Water-borne diseases are also likely to trouble people living next to the dumpsites (Hilgenkamp, 2005). When it rains, the surface run-off washes human wastes from the dumpsites downstream. This, in itself, becomes a threat to the residents who dare walk bare foot in this water. Besides, the water points down-stream become polluted and if consumed by human beings, health complications such as cholera, bilharzias, and other water-borne, typhoid and other health complications are likely to result (Hilgenkamp, 2005). Thus, dumpsites can have direct and indirect health effects on populations living adjacent to it.
Other direct and indirect contamination may result from birds that fly on the wastes in the dumpsites and using their claws and contaminated claws carry some wastes into the residential neighborhoods of the dumpsite. These pollution agents thus transfer calamity from the dumpsite into the door-steps of residents of areas neighboring the dumpsite. This way, the disease-causing pathogens from the dumpsite are brought closer to people, thus becoming a real health threat.

**Control Management Strategy**

In order to control the risks associated with water-borne diseases, dumpsites should not be constructed next to the drainage lines and water-points in a community. They should be constructed far away from water points so that the water that is used for human consumption and other domestic purposes is not contaminated. Besides, dumpsites should be constructed far away from residential areas (Hilgenkamp, 2005). This will limit the health complications such as malaria associated with mosquito–infested dumpsites. The health complications resulting from polluted air around the sites will also be limited.

The most effective, convenient and productive way of dealing with the health hazards related to dumpsites is conversion of the dumpsite into a recycling plant. This ensures that the wastes products that are dumped in the sites are converted into economically meaningful products that can be re-used (Hunter, 1997). This ensures that the health risks associated with constructed open dumpsite are reduced and the waste products are re-used for other important and less harmful activities.
Environment and Health Concept Map

The dumpsite poses health risks through dangerous metals, rust and old materials like broken glasses and plastics, human wastes, polythene materials and other waste products and mosquitoes that breed in the dumpsites. However, these risks can be averted through management and control strategies such as recycling, controlled drainage and location dumpsite out of human residence. Consequently, this will ensure that health hazards that the dumpsite poses such as water-borne diseases, airborne disease and malaria are controlled.
Environment can become a real threat to human health if there are no effective management strategies of the potential risks. Thus, construction of dumpsite should be done after thoughtful assessment and evaluation of the risks posed to human population.
References
