|  |
| --- |
| **Title of Round table discussion** (Sentence case) – Urban and Rural Divide in Terms of Health Literacy of Secondary School Students in Nigeria |
| **Maximum 2500 characters (including spaces but excluding title)**  **Conference sub-theme addressed – Inclusive Habitat**  **Relevant experience or practice**  The increased burden of communicable disease among secondary school children due to poor personal hygiene practices and inadequate sanitary conditions remains problem to the Nigerian society. Poor personal hygiene is a major public health challenge that affects many school children in developing countries. School plays a very important role in equipping students with the kind of knowledge that will empower them to make health enhancing decision. To make healthy life choices through the teaching of age and habitat/culturally appropriate health lessons as a component of formal education, promises to improve students’ ability to access and interpret health information. This has proven to be an important step in the process of achieving lifelong wellness.  **Implications for health promotion**  This study compared the health literacy of secondary students using parameters such as bathing, oral hygiene, hand washing, trimming of nails and cutting of hairs. It was found out that more of urban students compared to rural students were having knowledge as well as practice of personal hygiene. Knowledge and practice of personal hygiene is important in the promotion of healthy living. There is a habitat divide in the knowledge and practice of personal hygiene in Nigeria. From focus group interaction with participants, it is observed that there is a cultural undertone to hygiene practices indigenous to the various tribes and are held on to mostly in the rural areas. Undoubtedly the lack of adequate understanding of personal hygiene can result to epidemic of transmissible diseases among students and staff of the school community.  **Implications for sustainable development**  School based personal hygiene education is vital in order to decrease the rate of transmissible diseases, students are receptive to learning and are very likely to adopt healthy behaviour when taught and also if water and sanitary facilities are available at home and school. Adequate sanitation is the frontline method of preventing the spread of pathogens. The key to spreading the practice of hand washing with soap resides in promoting behavioural change through motivation information, and education. The ultimate goal of health literacy is to bring about, behavioural changes regarding health. Teaching health education in schools has helped students tackle the determinants of hygiene behaviour as it builds up personal cognitive and social skills, which determine the ability of students to gain access to, understand and use information to promote and maintain good health. Schools are essential in helping student to achieve health literacy in personal hygiene. |