

Assessing the health hazards present in open air markets and the effects they pose; a case of markets in Narok town, Kenya

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Abstract

The growth of open-air markets has been on the rise both globally and locally. Narok town has had its fair share of growth in open-air markets. These open-air markets are however associated with various health hazards which end up posing a threat to the health of the people working in these markets and the environment at large. This study aimed at identifying the health hazards in the two major open-air markets, that is, ODM and Muthurwa open-air markets and the effects they pose. The objectives for this were to determine the public health hazards and their effects in these markets, how these hazards affect the health of people working in these open-air markets, determine the levels of knowledge and awareness of public health standards and requirements among the market and to suggest possible recommendations on how to improve the working conditions in these open air markets. A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used where a semi-structured questionnaire was administered to the target population and was duly filled. From the results obtained from the study, it is evident that there are public health hazards present in these markets which tend to affect the health of the people working in these markets and the environment as well although they are not very severe. Although a few people in the market are aware of the public health standards in the markets, there is still inadequate information in these markets and the levels of awareness need to be improved in these markets. The working conditions of these markets also need to be improved to ensure the comfort of the people who work in these markets as well as those visiting the markets. This study concluded that these major open-air markets in Narok town face a couple of challenges and it is thus essential for all the stakeholders associated with these markets to be involved to adopt relevant measures that will help reduce these hazards that affect the people working in them. It was recommended that similar studies be conducted in other open-air markets in the country to compare the results with the findings of this study.

Keywords: open-air markets, health hazards, public, environment