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**Exploring the knowledge, attitudes and practices of students at Mangosuthu University of Technology on hand hygiene.**

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**Abstract**

**Background:**

Hand hygiene is one of the most effective and low-cost methods to prevent infectious disease transmission, yet compliance remains suboptimal. This study aimed to compare hand hygiene knowledge, attitudes, and practices between Environmental Health (EH) and Information Technology (IT) students at Mangosuthu University of Technology.

**Methodology:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted with 210 students (101 EH, 109 IT) using a self-administered structured questionnaire. Data was analyzed using MS excel for descriptive statistics, t-tests, and correlation analysis.

**Results:** Overall, EH students showed higher knowledge (86.9 %) and attitudes (91 %) towards daily hygiene scenarios compared to IT students which recorded 78.8 % and 81 % on knowledge and attitude respectively while practice gaps persisted in both groups. Attitude emerged as the key driver of practice. Statistical analysis showed significant differences ( $p < 0.05$ ) between the groups in all KAP domains. Correlation results indicated that attitude ( $r = 0.29$ ) was a stronger predictor of hygiene practice than knowledge ( $r = 0.002$ ).

**Conclusions:** EH students demonstrated superior knowledge, attitudes, and practices compared to IT students, but the knowledge did not consistently translate into behavior. Findings suggest that positive attitudes were more influential than knowledge in driving consistent hygiene practices.

**Recommendations:** The study recommends integrating hand hygiene awareness into non-health curricula, improving access to soap and sanitizers, and reinforcing behavior change through student-led campaigns and institutional support.

**Keywords:**

Hand hygiene, Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Environmental Health, University students, Infection prevention, Behavior change