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**Name of students: Chan Yee Sim, Cheung Shuk Ching, Cheng Yee Ning, Chan Mei Yu, Leung Wing Yu, Chan Po Na, Fong Yuk Yan, Li Ka Ching Joyce, Tai Yee Sze**

**Title: An observational study of hand washing performance of foreign domestic helpers in Hong Kong**

### **ABSTRACT**

Hand washing performance of caregivers in the community such as foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) can affect the health of local families. This research assessed the hand washing performance of FDHs in Hong Kong and its relationship with the personal characteristics (including age, education level, and number of years working in Hong Kong) of FDHs in Hong Kong. Also, this research examined the difference in hand washing performance between FDHs with different nationalities and different source(s) of hand hygiene training course attended.

This study adopted an observational design. Through convenience sampling, one hundred and fifty FDHs were recruited. They were invited to perform hand washing in a public accessible toilet in front of the researchers. Direct observation on participants' hand washing performance was conducted with the use of the Hand Washing Performance Checklist. The checklist comprised of 13 assessment items covering all the steps of hand washing. It was developed with reference to the Guideline for Hand Hygiene prepared by the Centre for Health Protection.

All the participants did not demonstrate all the 13 hand washing steps correctly. Subjects' performance on each hand washing step varied. For example, 96.0% of the participants demonstrated wet hands under running water correctly. However, only 4.7% of the participants demonstrated the step 'rubbed back of fingers' correctly. Moreover, significant difference was found in hand washing performance between the 'Philippines' group and the 'Others' group, and between the 'Indonesia' group and the 'Others' group. Also, there was significant difference in the hand washing performance between the group with no hand hygiene training course attended and the group with hand hygiene training course attended in school or academic institution, and between the group with no hand hygiene training course attended and the group with hand hygiene training course attended in official organization. However, no

significant relationship was found between the independent variables (age, education level, number of years working in Hong Kong) and hand washing performance of the participants.

This study contributes to provide a picture on hand washing performance of the FDHs in Hong Kong. The valuable information can facilitate the government, health care professionals, FDHs employment agencies and employers to implement strategies for improving hand washing performance of the FDHs.