

Safety and health risks associated with illegal municipal solid waste disposal in urban Zimbabwe. “A case of Masvingo City”

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Abstract

Municipal solid waste management (MSWM) is a worldwide problem as most local authorities are unable to dispose MSW safely. The study sought to evaluate safety and health risks associated with illegal MSW disposal in Masvingo City. Descriptive cross-sectional design was employed in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently. Questionnaires with both close and open-ended questions, semi-structured interviews, observations and secondary data sources were used during data collection. The study population comprised participants from Masvingo City’s residential areas, Masvingo City Council employees and Environmental Management Agency (EMA) officials. A sample of 406 participants, comprising 354 residents from high-density, 16 residents from medium-density, 24 residents from low-density suburbs. Six interviewees were included during the study. Interviewees were selected purposively. Quantitative data was entered into Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet for analysis and content analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. Results showed that Cholera, skin problems, injuries and malaria were the main health problems. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that MSW disposal in Masvingo was a threat to safety and human health. The study recommends that Masvingo City council provide receptacles and collect waste frequently.

Keywords: Municipal Solid Waste, Illegal Disposal, Safety Risks, And Health Risks, Urban Zimbabwe, Safety and Health