

## ***OBJECTIVE:***

The main causes of mortality and morbidity in Mandera are conditions related to inadequate water and sanitation such as diarrhoea, which has led to malnutrition and mortality among children under five years. This paper highlights the main sources of water in the district and identifies the water risk factors associated with diarrhoeal morbidity among these children.

## ***METHODS:***

A cross sectional descriptive study was carried out within the district, specifically in Khalalio, Central, Malkamari and Hareri divisions, the main respondents being caregivers from households where there was one or more children under the age of five. A sample size of 350 respondents from the households was interviewed using interview schedules. Other methods used were focus group discussions, observation and key informant interviews. Results: Most of the respondents used the river as the main water source; however, there were differences in the divisions on the water sources. Often times, the water sources were not available throughout the year and the residents mainly depended on the river during times of drought. The river was as a result a major avenue for contamination. Most of the water sources were close to the households, but they used crude methods in transporting the water to the households, such as rolling jerricans on the ground. Less care was given to handling water at the household level, even after the poor means of transport, resulting in more children suffering from diarrhoea.

## ***CONCLUSIONS:***

The significant water risk factors as identified were the mode of water transportation, and the poor handling of water at the household level, including lack of or inappropriate water treatment methods. These, combined with the low education level further pre dispose the under five children to diarrhoea, thus calling for increased health education on safe water handling.