

ABSTRACTTHE ROLE OF PIPEBORNE WATER IN THE SPREAD OF GASTROENTERITIS  
IN SOME AREAS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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In Trinidad and Tobago, gastroenteritis is regarded as a major health problem and an attempt was made to determine the role of pipeborne water in the spread of the disease in some areas of the country. Eighteen children in an area which every year has a high incidence of gastroenteritis and thirteen children in an area of low incidence of the disease were used in the study. Stool samples from the children and water samples from taps in their homes were collected on a weekly basis. All the children were four years and under and lived in Middle/Low Socioeconomic areas.

Salmonellae and Shigellae were isolated on three occasions from water and seventeen occasions from stool samples but the tap water was not found to be responsible for symptomatic and asymptomatic infections in any of the children.

Stool samples from children suffering from gastroenteritis in the area of highest incidence of the disease in the country and water samples from all the standpipes serving the area were collected on a fortnightly basis. Salmonellae and shigellaewere isolated from tap water but not from stool samples. It was therefore concluded that tap water was not responsible for the disease in this area.