

SAFER WATER, BETTER HEALTH



World Health
Organization

Safer water, better health. 2019 update

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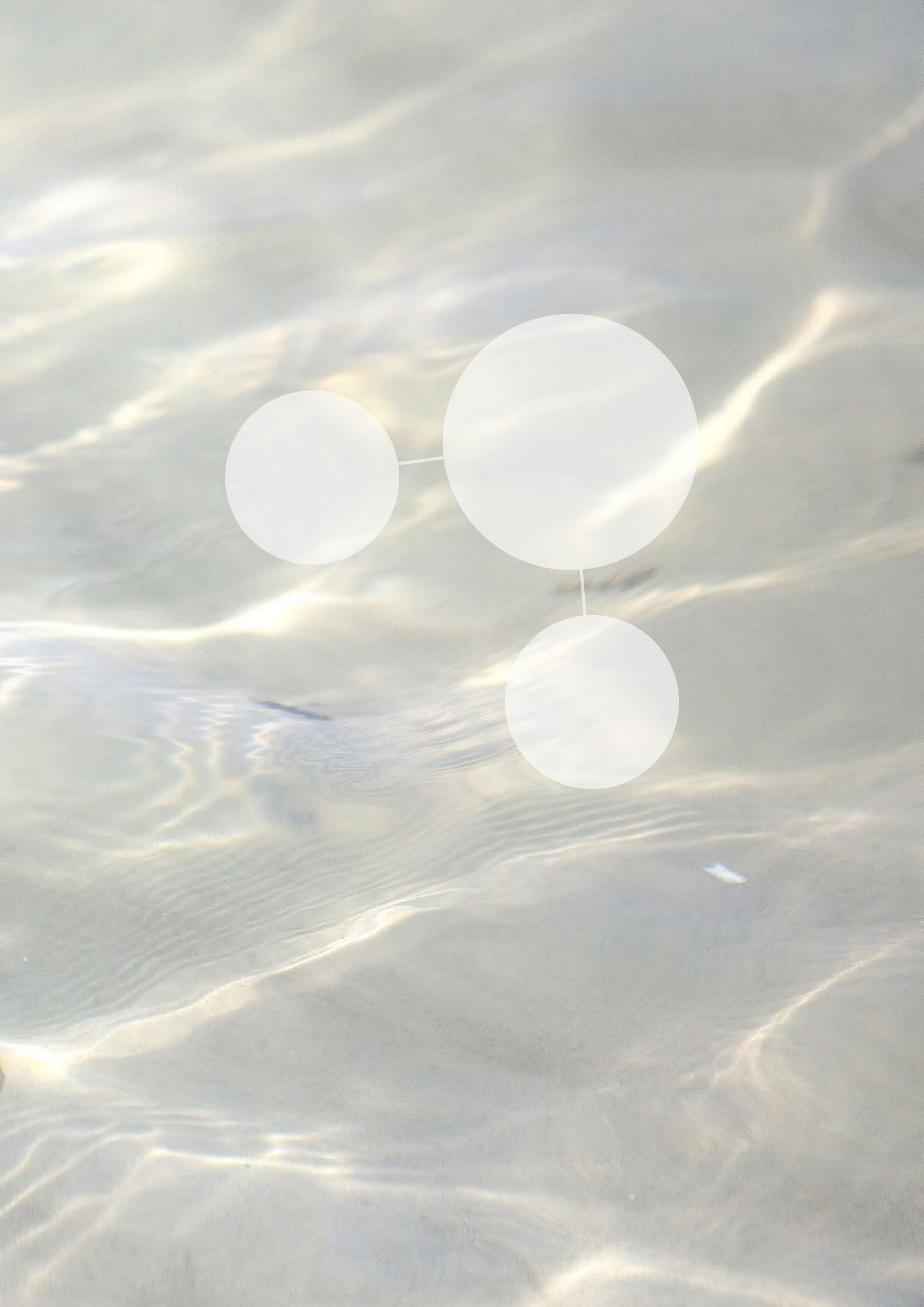
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Boy welcoming the rain.
Millions of people
worldwide face severe
water shortages.



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Annette Prüss-Ustün estimated the burden of disease. The evidence and estimates for this update were reviewed in a report, "Preventing disease through healthy environments" (1).

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Key findings

A large proportion of the overall disease burden, 3.3% of global deaths and 4.6% of global disability-adjusted life years (DALYs), was attributed to quantifiable effects of inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in 2016. This represents nearly 2 million preventable deaths and 123 million preventable DALYs annually. Children under 5 years of age are disproportionately affected by inadequate WASH: 13% of all deaths and 12% of all DALYs in this age group are related to inadequate WASH.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the largest disease burden from inadequate WASH: 53% of all WASH-attributable deaths and 60% of all WASH-attributable DALYs occur in this region, and nearly one fifth of all deaths of children under 5 years could be prevented with adequate WASH. This report presents estimates of the WASH-attributable burden of 12 major diseases, adverse health outcomes and injuries and evidence for links between WASH and another 14 conditions that have not yet been quantified because of data limitations. Not all the health effects of inadequate WASH on the diseases assessed could be quantified, such as the wider community risks of unsafe disposal or use of sewage.

The report also presents selected WASH interventions that have been shown to improve health and complements them with available cost-effectiveness analyses.



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