

SVENSKA CELLULOSA AKTIEBOLAGET SCA (publ)

Corporate Communications

Box 7827, 103 97 Stockholm

Tel +46 (0)8-788 51 00

[www.sca.com](http://www.sca.com)



Stockholm, December 8, 2009

## Swine flu changes people's behaviour and increases the demand for improved hygiene in public environments

***SCA, the world's third largest hygiene company, today launches Hygiene Matters 2010. This is an international report revealing that concern remains high that poor hygiene increases the risk of infection with, for example, swine flu. As many as seven in ten worry they will fall ill. Four in ten have changed their personal hygiene habits following the recent influenza scare out of fear of contracting the infection. This has included washing hands more frequently and using antibacterial soap.***

### The nearer the infection, the greater the concern

The attitude survey was conducted in nine countries during August 2009 and forms the basis of the report. It shows that the level of concern that insufficient hygiene increases the risk of infection is highest among Mexicans, 54%, and lowest among Swedes, 6%. Compared with the preceding year, the sharpest increase in concern regarding hygiene was seen among the Chinese, up from 23% to 46%.

Rolf Andersson, Senior Advisor Hygiene at SCA, had the following comments:

“People who have recently been affected by, for example, the influenza virus, such as the Chinese and Mexicans, show a higher level of concern than people in other countries – this is entirely natural. Meanwhile, it is interesting to read that four in ten Swedes report that they are flying less frequently as a result of the recent influenza scare for fear of becoming infected, although only 6% of Swedes said that they were worried that they would become ill due to poor hygiene. There is an obvious discrepancy between attitude and behaviour.”

### Improved hygiene in schools high on the agenda

Twice as many young adults (18-22 years old, 29%) are worried about becoming ill from swine flu as a result of poor hygiene compared with the older age group (56+, 14%). Nearly five in ten young adults (48%) are more aware of hygiene issues today than before the influenza alarm compared with the older age group, where only three in ten indicated that their awareness had increased (31%).

The people surveyed in various countries believe that improved hygiene in schools should be higher up on the agenda. Seven in ten believe that one of the schools' most important areas of responsibility is to maintain a high standard of hygiene. Four in ten respondents say that poor hygiene standards in schools affect children's well-being, thus negatively impacting their learning capacity – five in ten Swedes concur with this statement.

Rolf Andersson gives a more detailed explanation:

“The school is a large workplace where students and personnel are constantly exposed to bacteria and viruses, which, for example, places rigorous demands on adequate amenities that promote good hand hygiene. As a result, schools play an important part in efforts to disseminate knowledge regarding hygiene and how best to protect against diseases. Furthermore, the school is in an environment in which students, and teenage



girls in particular, must be offered good opportunities to learn about – and practice – their intimate hygiene. This not only requires knowledge on the part of the school, but there is also a need for toilets and other areas that ensure that this development phase in life is perceived as positive. If these opportunities are not offered, there is a danger that the learning process will be adversely impacted, which can have negative implications for development in other ways.”

### **Growing demand for improved hygiene in public environments**

The survey clearly shows that people have become more aware of hygiene in public environments. For example, three in ten stated that they avoided using public toilets in the wake of the recent influenza alarm for fear of becoming infected, and five in ten travel by bus and underground/tram less often for the same reason.

Some six out of ten respondents believe that hygiene issues should be assigned a higher priority in society by such groups as politicians and the media. The Chinese, Mexicans and French feel most strongly about raising the priority of hygiene issues.

Rolf Andersson points out:

“The survey shows that people around the world think that hygiene should be improved in such public environments as toilets, preschools, schools, swimming baths, gyms, restaurants and hospitals. Naturally, everything is an issue of priority, but cost-efficient hygiene solutions for public environments are currently available and these yield long-term beneficial effects in the form of a healthier population, leading to fewer visits to healthcare institutions and fewer sick days, which is beneficial from a national economic perspective.”

### **For more information, contact:**

Jörgen Olsson, Press and Media Officer, SCA, +46 (0)70-256 20 77

### **Background of the Hygiene Matters series of reports**

Through the Hygiene Matters series of reports, SCA aims to increase awareness of hygiene and health issues among decision makers, experts and the general public – and at the same time contribute to a more informed public debate that strengthens the possibility of an improved standard of hygiene and health for many people throughout the world.

For images, graphics and the full report, visit [www.hygienematters.com](http://www.hygienematters.com) or [www.sca.com](http://www.sca.com).

### **About the attitude survey**

The attitude survey, which was carried out in August 2009, was commissioned by SCA and conducted by the business intelligence consulting firm United Minds and the research company Cint.

The survey was conducted in nine countries: Australia, France, China, Mexico, Russia, Sweden, the UK, Germany and the US. Responses were compiled through a web-based

**SVENSKA CELLULOSA AKTIEBOLAGET SCA (publ)**



survey and a total of 5,084 persons participated, with a distribution of about 500 persons per country. Nationally, a representative division between men and women and between age groups was ensured.