



## Departmental Talk

# Qualitative Perspectives on WASH and Schistosomiasis: Developing a Mixed-Methods Protocol in Rural Brazil



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PPDH – Políticas Públicas e Direitos Humanos em Saúde e Saneamento, Instituto René Rachou, Fundação Oswaldo Cruz Belo Horizonte, Brazil

**Date & Time:** Thursday 23 Oct, 2025 | 12:00-13:00 CEST (7:00-8:00 BRT/13:00-14:00 EAT)

**Venue:** Zentrum für Public Health, Seminarraum 3, Kinderspitalgasse 15, 1090 Wien

This talk will be held in a hybrid format and can also be accessed via Zoom ([link](#)).

**Host:** Astrid Erber

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## Abstract

Schistosomiasis caused by *Schistosoma mansoni* is a neglected tropical disease prevalent in Brazil, primarily in southeastern and northeastern states such as Alagoas. Due to the low to medium endemicity, there has been growing awareness that its elimination in Brazil requires not only biomedical interventions but an integrated approach, prioritizing its social determinants, including WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) practices.

Given this scenario, the SaneaXisto project investigates the association between different levels of access to water and sanitation services and the occurrence of schistosomiasis in Alagoas. The epidemiological study (quantitative phase, ongoing) encompasses household-based sampling of 1,500 participants from 75 communities. Data collection includes questionnaires on socioeconomic and sanitation conditions, health status, and risk behaviors, as well as parasitological and molecular testing for schistosomiasis and other helminths. Preliminary results have shown positivity rates of stool samples ranging from 5% to 20%, as well as the presence of *Ancylostoma*, *Ascaris* and *Trichuris trichiura*. Water will be subjected to physical-chemical and microbiological as well as molecular analysis to verify the presence of *S. mansoni* and its host, *Biomphalaria glabrata* snails. Collected snails will be submitted to taxonomic, parasitological and molecular analysis.

Here we present an explanatory sequential mixed method design in which this quantitative phase is followed by qualitative research. The epidemiological study will guide qualitative sampling and data acquisition practices via participant observation, interviews, and focus group discussions. Results will be used to expand on how individual and collective practices, perceptions, and constraints shape interactions with water and sanitation systems, and sustain disease transmission. By integrating epidemiological evidence with sociocultural insights, this study aims to address how structural conditions, and everyday practices interact to influence vulnerability to schistosomiasis, informing more context-sensitive approaches to disease prevention and control.