

Consumption | Individual communication

IC - (20899) - REDUCING WATER CONSUMPTION IN THE HOME: WATER SMART TECHNOLOGY AND MOMENTS OF CHANGE

Joanne Swaffield¹

1 - Cardiff University

Background and objectives

In the context of a changing climate, water scarcity is a significant and multifaceted problem. Increased temperatures and reduced rainfall will decrease available freshwater in countries across the globe, while simultaneously increasing water demand for hydrating, cooling and irrigating. This paper focuses on water consumption in UK households and the ways in which we might encourage a change in water use behaviours. Specifically, it evaluates the effect of introducing a behaviour change intervention at a 'moment of change' in a person's life. Many environmentally significant actions are strongly influenced by habitual behaviour and, even when we want to protect the climate, our everyday actions are constrained by the habits we have formed (e.g. leaving the tap running while we brush our teeth, taking long showers). However, at a 'moment of change' (e.g. moving house, retiring) an individual is more likely to be able to form and sustain new climate protecting habits.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

In collaboration with the water utility Anglian Water, we tested this hypothesis by providing home movers in the East of England with information about the impact of water 'wasted' in the shower and a device that records shower duration (a smart shower sensor). We analyse shower duration and overall daily water consumption of this group compared to non-home movers and those who are not part of the intervention.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

We find that customers who are provided with a smart shower sensor and information at the point at which they move house (a moment of change) save more water than customers who are either not moving house or do not receive the device and information.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

Implications for habit disruption theory and intervention design will be discussed. This is one of the first field experiments on moments of change, and perhaps the only one to focus on water consumption.

Palavras-chave : water consumption, field experiment, moment of change, relocation, behaviour change