

Review Article

Critical Assessment of Treated Wastewater and Their Reuse for Irrigation in Iraq

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Article History

Received: 19.04.2022

Accepted: 04.06.2022

Published: 12.06.2022

Abstract: Rustumihia is one of the biggest WWTP (Waste Water Treatment Plant) based in Baghdad the capital of Iraq. The effluent treated wastewater, were used for irrigation by the farmers nearby the Rustumihia WWTP. The growth of Iraqi population and limited development in the infrastructure to the treatment plants in Iraq like old Rustumihia project. There is a need to assess the treated effluents water that is used for irrigation. Wastewater considered as a key alternative water resource as it can be used in agriculture field to reimburse shortages in water need. In developed countries like Iraq, the irrigation by using wastewater has a long history. Continues lagging in WWTP maintenance and its infrastructure could cause many problems for the treated effluent that has its own effect on health and environment aspects. Therefore, by applying a strong management practices, for example advanced and appropriate treated and irrigated knowledge, can be used later to gain significant advantages in the same time minimizing health risks. This article discussed the treated wastewater used by farmers nearby Rustumihia treatment plant and focus on the challenges linked with wastewater irrigation.

Keywords: Rustumihia plant, treated wastewater, irrigation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1-1 BACKGROUND

A major priority must be given to the treated wastewater which is released back into the environment in order to remove pollutants that can be diagnosed as an environmental health danger. Local authorities (*i.e.*, city and county councils) are responsible for the management of wastewater collection and infrastructure treatment. The Ministry of Environment and Water Resources is the main body which is accountable for regulating and authorising the discharged wastewater from the water services.

The authorisation system purpose is to block or reduce contaminants by wastewater discharges. In developing countries like (Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, *etc.*) wastewater treatment is critical as a consequence of the distinctive discharge of contaminated effluents from agricultural, industrial, and local municipal/sewage activities (Jayyousi *et al.*, 2004; Abdulrazza, 2013 and Massoud, 2014). Due to improper discharge of liquid and solid waste into the surface water and land, water contaminants are considered as a major critical environmental issue. Domestic wastewater, agricultural residues, chemicals and industrial effluents are categorised as the most significant sewage disposal issues (Abdul Karim, 2013). Furthermore, the continued disposable waste, the primarily industrial and domestic wastewater that goes straight away into the rivers is one of the basic causes of river pollution. Most of the WWTPs are operated and designed to decrease the contaminant loads to a level that the environment can handle. Thus, it is important to evaluate the environmental influence of the present wastewater treatment facilities (Massoud, 2014 and Massoud *et al.*, 2019).

As such, the urban drainage system should be considered as a fundamental infrastructure designed to eliminate both rainwater and wastewater from the city in an attempt to reduce unhygienic circumstances and to avoid any excessive

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Citation: T. Noor & Entkhab M. A. Alanisi (2022) Critical Assessment of Treated Wastewater and Their Reuse for Irrigation in Iraq. *South Asian Res J Bio Appl Biosci*, 4(2), 50-62. 50

destruction caused by flooding (Adila, 2011). In 1981, Haist and Partners designed the Rustumihia wastewater plant. Rustumihia is one of the oldest wastewater treatment plants in Baghdad/Iraq which supply public health services to more third of whole Baghdad population habitant (Aenab and Singh, 2015). It is located in the southeastern part of Baghdad and its 2 kilometers away from the closest resident population area. The nature of the land for this sanitation project was an agricultural type (Abdul Hameed *et al*, 2010) Through Rustumihia, All the treated waste was disposed with automatic ways into Diyala river stream. The effluents quality was based on the Iraqi standards of effluent wastes disposal into the receiving waters (AbdulKarim, 2013). AL-Samawi, (2008) studied Al-Rustumihia WWTP efficiency performance before and after rehabilitation in order to confirm the rehabilitated work efficiency. His results displayed that the Rustumihia WWTP effluent discharge into Diyala River did not meet the Iraqi effluent standards. On the other hand, all biological processing results clarify an obvious biological concern. All the results revealed distinctly that the rehabilitated program had no considerable effect on ameliorating the actual state of negligence.

(Aenab and Singh 2015), estimated the performance and effectiveness of the sewage treatment plants in Baghdad for both Al-Risafa and Al-Karkh sides. All the calculations were carried out on the average basement and the peak capacity of each plant according to the population growth rates with three values in Baghdad for the period between 2005 and 2025. The study demonstrated that the treatment efficiency deficit ratio would reach 273% in the next coming fifteen years in Rustumihia WWTP. Moreover, at Al-Karkh sewage treatment plant, the situation is more complicated as the shortage in the treatment adequacy will reach 700%. It is important to understand the main concentrations, the variation range of the chemical parameters and the ratios that are used to elucidate the wastewater quality to maintain warranty for the suited design and size of the treatment facilities.



Image captured by Google earth 2010 for Rustumihia WWTP

1-2 The importance Quality parameters in the agricultural use of wastewaters

According to Aziz and Aws (2012), a new regulation, No. 25 for the year 1967, was issued by the Iraqi government regarding the protection of stream and water tanks from pollution. The legalization prohibits any kind of wastewater discharge into the main water body without requesting a particular permit issued by the health administration. This law controlled the quantity and quality of discharged wastewater into the natural sources.

Table 1: Quality standard for water sources according to Regulation 25, issued by the Iraqi government (Aziz and Aws 2012)

| Constituents | | Units | Con. Level |
|--------------|---|-------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Colour | - | Normal |
| 2 | Temperature | - | - |
| 3 | Suspended solid | - | - |
| 4 | PH | - | 6.5-6.8 |
| 5 | Dissolved Oxygen | Mg/L | More than 5 |
| 6 | BOD ₅ | “ | Less than 3 |
| 7 | COD (Cr ₂ O ₇ method) | “ | - |
| 8 | Cyanide CN ⁻ | “ | 0.02 |
| 9 | Fluoride F ⁻ | “ | 0.02 or more as naturally present |
| 10 | Free chlorine | “ | Trace |
| 11 | Chloride | “ | 200 or more as naturally present |
| 12 | Phenol | “ | 0.005 |
| 13 | Sulphate | “ | 200 or more as naturally present |
| 14 | Nitrate(NO ₃) | “ | 15 |

| Constituents | | Units | Con. Level |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------|
| 15 | Phosphate (PO ₄) | “ | 0.4 |
| 16 | Ammonium (NH ₄) | “ | 1.0 |
| 17 | DDT | “ | N.L. |
| 18 | Lead(pb) | “ | 0.05 |
| 19 | Arsenic AS | “ | 0.05 |
| 20 | Copper Cu | “ | 0.05 |
| 21 | Nickel Ni | “ | 0.1 |
| 22 | Selenium Se | “ | 0.01 |
| 23 | Mercury Hg | “ | 0.001 |
| 24 | Cadmium Cd | “ | 0.005 |
| 25 | Zinc Zn | Mg/L | 0.5 |
| 26 | Chromium Cr | “ | 0.05 |
| 27 | Aluminum Al | “ | 0.1 |
| 28 | Barium Ba | “ | 1.0 |
| 29 | Boron B | “ | 1.0 |
| 30 | Cobalt Co | “ | 0.05 |
| 31 | Iron Fe | “ | 0.3 |
| 32 | Manganese Mn | “ | 0.1 |
| 33 | Silver Ag | “ | 0.01 |
| 34 | Total hydrocarbons and their compounds | For detail refer to regulation No.25 | - |
| 35 | Sulfide S | - | - |
| 36 | Ammonia N as NH ₃ | - | - |
| 37 | Ammonia gas (NaS free NH ₃) | - | - |
| 38 | Sulphur dioxide (SO ₂) | - | - |
| 39 | Petroleum Alcohol | - | - |
| 40 | Calcium Carbide (CaC) | - | - |
| 41 | Organic Solvents | - | - |
| 42 | Benzene | - | - |
| 43 | Chlorobenzene | - | - |
| 44 | TNT | - | - |
| 45 | Bromine | - | - |

Major amounts of wastewater usually come from an urban area that has sewer networks. The sewage composition depends on the urban area characteristics. The treatment process is mainly affected by the suspended solids, phosphorus, ammonia, BOD₅, and organic nitrogen. In fact, domestic wastewater sewage is infected with viruses, protozoa, pathogenic organisms, helminths eggs, and bacteria. Baghdad city has three main sewage treatment plants:

1. The old Rustamiyah treatment plant, design capacity (175,000) m³/d⁻¹.
2. Karkh treatment plant, design capacity (205,000) m³/d⁻¹.
3. New Rustamiyah treatment plant, design capacity (300,000) m³/d⁻¹.

In Iraq, the treated sewage waste is about (580) million m³. The estimated water that is used for agriculture is (15000) m³/ha, which helps to irrigate around (38666) ha.

Table 2: Treatment plants in Baghdad and some pollutant concentrations mg/L

| Project name | BOD ₅ | COD | TDS | S.S | PO ₄ | SO ₄ | NH ₃ | NO ₃ |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----|------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Karkh sewage | 15 | 86 | 26 | 44 | 36 | 9.5 | 1.8 | - |
| | 22 | 95 | 34 | 43 | 31 | 7.8 | 1.4 | - |
| | 17 | 81 | 21 | 51 | 30 | 8.6 | 1.6 | - |
| Old Rustumihia sewage | 50 | 92 | 1766 | 99 | 3.2 | - | - | - |
| | 55 | 97 | 1734 | 100 | 2.9 | - | - | - |
| | 58 | 94 | 1801 | 87 | 2.6 | - | - | - |
| New Rustumihia sewage | 35 | 146 | 2507 | 20 | 7.9 | - | - | - |
| | 38 | 143 | 2201 | 19 | 8.3 | - | - | - |
| | 43 | 138 | 2224 | 23 | 8.6 | - | - | - |

1-3 Parameters of agricultural significance

Generally, flood and watering cans, the so-called furrow irrigation, are the main means used by farmers to irrigate the peri-urban and urban (Martijin and Redwood, 2005; Drechsel *et al.*, 2006; Keraita *et al.*, 2010 and Massoud *et al.*, 2019). Farmers should be advised when choosing irrigation methods via extension services to maintain the quality of the supplied water (Amponsah *et al.*, 2016). The opportunities for harvest contamination with health risk issues like pathogens are quite high during the irrigation process; there are environmental implications and potential health risks (Alegbeleye and Sant'Ana, 2020). Certainly, the choice does not only rely on water affordability but also on water quality, labor availability, tenure security and other output factors. Predominantly, suitable water hoses are not obtainable and they usually are much expensive to afford. The lowest cost method is the flood irrigation if the topography is convenient or laborers can afford a pump. On the other hand, water use efficiency is considered the least successful where it is not a restriction factor. A higher level of health protection could be provided by furrow irrigation. However, there has to be special requirements such as land levelling and suitable topography.

Certain irrigation methods that spread water on the crop surface like irrigation with watering cans and sprinklers are not recommended despite the fact that fragile vegetable beds, usually favour them; the least cost effective irrigation methods are cans in contrast with the sprinklers which have medium water use efficiency and medium to high cost in addition to a pump and hose care should be exercised when using sprinklers irrigation method such as irrigating at night and not irrigating during windy conditions (Qadir *et al.*, 2010).

Some field attempts regarding sorghum and forage crops particularly in Tunisia revealed that contamination is bacterial; it developed after irrigation method with secondary treated wastewater diversified according to the type of crop, season, weather, bacterial species, and the number of the days after cessation of irrigation as they used cessation of irrigation, prior to harvest to permit natural and habitat pathogen die-off (Gaaloul N., 2011). In conducted field trials on lettuce in Ghana, cessation led to the loss of fresh weight. However, 4-5 days without irrigation would increase food security making it safer, about 25% of a yield loss was not convenient enough to farmers. A cessation of 2 days would be a compromise with higher adoption potential, with 10% of a yield reduction (Keratita *et al.*, 2007 and Drechsel *et al.*, 2008).

Partially treated wastewater or untreated wastewater has many risks when used in agriculture. These risks can be brought down through integrating both factors: non-treatment options and waste water treatment (WHO, 2006) which involve: (1) controlling human exposure, (2) improving water quality, (3) managing the farm level wastewater, and (4) intervening harvest and post-harvest. In many developing countries like Iraq, Jordan, Lybia ...etc. wastewater quality used for irrigation could be improved initially by improving the primary treatment of wastewater (Alegbeleye and Sant'Ana, 2020).

In some areas, secondary treatment can be implemented at a sensible cost, using methods like waste stabilisation ponds, infiltration-percolation, constructed wetlands, and up-flow anaerobic sludge blanket reactors (Sarma, 2020). It is important to aim at standards which can be implemented in the local context. One of the WHO (2006) guidelines, provide integral choices for human exposure control and wastewater treatment. Storing treated wastewater in tanks ameliorates microbiological quality and supplies peak equalisation capabilities, which boost the accuracy of supply and enhance the rate of reuse. In the King Talal Reservoir, the Amman-Zarqa Basin of Jordan, the fecal coliform levels were reduced in the water downstream of the dam by long detention times. However, it was not initially planned for that aim (Grabow and McCorinck, 2007 and Al Omari, 2020).

In another developing country, Morocco, particularly in Drarga, the most untreated wastewater is discharged, polluting drinking water providers. An institutional participant including urban water users, local water management stakeholders, and agriculture user groups was established to confirm maintenance and sustainability of the reclaimed and reused program (Nehren *et al.*, 2020). An obligatory fee was imposed on domestic water providers; it applied cost-recovery mechanisms on others. (Qadir *et al.*, 2010 and Aenab and Singh, 2015). Deep percolation can exclude microorganisms and recharge groundwater; the supplied soil attribute is suitable, and the processes are duly managed.

A key component involves suitably maintaining adequate microbiological populations, appropriate flooding and drying cycles, and retaining sufficient distance and transient time between leakage basins and water providing wells (Asano and Cotruvo, 2004 and Nehren *et al.*, 2020). Whereas in developed countries which have adopted certain policies to maintain high water quality and to organise wastewater use, the unreasonable standards usually make implementation hard to achieve or the process may become an expensive target only to be realized in the long term. In accordance with the technical, local, social, economic, and cultural contexts, meaningful criteria need to be established. Furthermore, enhancing the water quality demands new approaches to wastewater management in cities, subdividing cities into manageable units following Bangkok as an inspiring example, which made possible successes step-wise (Okadera *et al.*, 2020).

More than a quarter of the national vegetable production in Pakistan is irrigated with wastewater (Ensink *et al.*, 2004 and Mahmood, A. and Malik, 2014). In Ghana, informal irrigation that includes diluted wastewater comes from streams and rivers occupying about 11,500 ha which is larger than reported extent of formal irrigation (Keraita *et al.*, 2012). Around 260,000 ha in Mexico are irrigated mostly with untreated wastewater (Castro, 2004). The farmers in most of these cases irrigate lands with untreated, diluted, or slightly treated wastewater. Farmers and their family who have direct exposure to untreated wastewater face many health risks factors like bacteria, parasitic worms, and viruses.

The wastewater used for irrigation has a major negative influence on the environmental health conditions (Jahany and Rezapour, 2020 and Wu, 2020). Environmental and health aspects are precisely sensitive issues and they are crucial. Sewage water must not be accepted; it should not be used to substitute standard or probably other non-standard water sources for irrigation processes unless it is safely applied and adequately addressed (Alsharhan and Rizk, 2020 and Yaser and Safie, 2020). The most important achieved goals of water reuse in agriculture are to supply sufficient amount of high-quality water to growers and to adhere to food health safety (Wu, 2020). Consequently, in developed countries, the water quality objective is usually determined via public institutions bearing in mind the required wastewater treatment factors and health risks.

There are specifically integrated programmes for the reuse of reclaimed water in developed countries. These programmes are sophisticated; they are set by a specialized government body and they involve policies to enhance the supervision on wastewater before it is used in agriculture. Afterwards, the irrigated crops and products are offered for sale and human consuming. California is considered one of the first pioneer States that exerted the necessary efforts to promote treated wastewater and reuse it in the agriculture field. The first publicised regulation of reused water was in 1918 (Asano and Levine, 1996). At present, around 1.5% of the municipal water in the United States is reused in agriculture. Furthermore, the amount of the reused municipal wastewater by California residents is around 656 million cubic meters per year. The integrated reused wastewater programs in other developed countries, such as Israel have allowed that wastewater accounts for 20% of water incomes which is used in the agriculture (Brooks *et al.*, 2020 and Miarov *et al.*, 2020).

The quality of municipal water provider determines the water excellence generated from treated wastewater, the degree of treatment for the received wastewater and the compositions of the wastes added through use. To control wastewater quality, data are regularly collected, measured and recorded at the main treatment plant specifically for treated sewage disposal or discharge necessities regarding the total contamination limitations, for example, chemical oxygen demand (COD), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), suspended solids (SS). These factors are the main concerns for water contamination management (Bharagava and Saxena, 2020 and Qi *et al.*, 2020). Nonetheless, there are specific chemical compounds and elements which have a direct effect on soil permeability or plant growth; they exist in the water used for irrigation in landscape and agriculture (Saxena *et al.*, 2020). Due attention must be given to some characteristics which are not recorded or measured via treatment agencies as part of their regular monitoring programmed for water quality. Thus, all the data collected from a treated wastewater irrigation system are necessary; they are used when samples of those selected factors are analysed; they define the conviviality of the treated water that is used for landscape irrigation and agriculture (Alsharhan and Rizk, 2020). In order to assess water quality that is used for irrigation, there is a list of laboratory limitations that need to be implemented as illustrated in Table three below (Ayers and Westcot 1989).

Table 3: Laboratory determinations needed to evaluate common irrigation water quality problems (Ayers and Westcot 1989)

| Parameter | Symbol | Unit |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Salinity | | |
| Electrical conductivity | EC _w | dS/m |
| Total dissolved solids | TDS | mg/l |
| Cations and anions | | |
| Calcium | Ca ²⁺ | mg/l |
| Magnesium | Mg ²⁺ | mg/l |
| Sodium | Na ⁺ | mg/l |
| Carbonate | CO ₃ ²⁻ | mg/l |
| Bicarbonate | HCO ₃ ⁻ | mg/l |
| Chloride | Cl ⁻ | mg/l |
| Sulphate | SO ₄ ⁻ | mg/l |
| Miscellaneous | | |
| Boron | B | mg/l |
| Hydrogen ion activity | Ph | unit |
| Sodium adsorption ratio | SAR | Dimensionless |

The treated municipal wastewater that is used for irrigation depends on Ayers and Westcot (1989) which is considered a valid basic reference till now. Later on, other different styles are used; they present more advanced water quality guidelines that emphasise the control needed to effectively use a certain quality of water for irrigation. The guideline style is frequently used a lot in estimating irrigation water quality; it is clarified in Table 4 below (Asano *et al.*, 2007). According to Pedrero *et al.*, (2010), the potential restrictions in use shown in below are somewhat arbitrary since water quality changes occur gradually and there is no clear-cut break point. It is also important to realise that it is not applicable covering all local situations when planning to organise water quality guidelines.

Table 4: Guidelines for interpreting water quality for irrigation (Asano *et al.*, 2007)

| Potential irrigation problem | Units | Degree of restriction on use | | |
|---|-------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | None | Moderate | Severe |
| Salinity | | | | |
| EC _w | dS/m | ≤0.7 | 0.7–3.0 | ≥3.0 |
| TDS | mg/l | 450 | 450–2000 | 2000 |
| Permeability (effects of infiltration rate of water into the soil. Evaluate using EC _w and SAR together) | | | | |
| | SAR = 0–3 | EC _w ≥ 0.7 | EC _w 0.7–0.2 | EC _w ≤ 0.2 |
| | SAR = 3–6 | EC _w ≥ 1.2 | EC _w 1.2–0.3 | EC _w ≤ 0.3 |
| | SAR = 6–12 | EC _w ≥ 1.9 | EC _w 1.9–0.5 | EC _w ≤ 0.5 |
| | SAR = 12–20 | EC _w ≥ 2.9 | EC _w 2.9–1.3 | EC _w ≤ 1.3 |
| | SAR = 20–40 | EC _w ≥ 5.0 | EC _w 5.0–2.9 | EC _w ≤ 2.9 |
| Specific ion toxicity | | | | |
| Sodium (Na) | | | | |
| Surface irrigation | mg/l | ≤3 | 3–9 | ≥9 |
| Sprinkler irrigation | mg/l | ≤70 | >70 | |
| Chloride (Cl) | | | | |
| Surface irrigation | mg/l | ≤140 | 140–350 | ≥350 |
| Sprinkler irrigation | mg/l | ≤100 | >100 | |
| Boron (B) | | | | |
| Surface–sprinkler irrigation | mg/l | ≤0.7 | 0.7–3 | ≥3 |
| Miscellaneous effects | | | | |
| Nitrogen(Total N) | mg/l | ≤5 | 5–30 | ≥30 |
| Bicarbonate(overhead sprinkling only) | mg/l | ≤90 | 90–500 | ≥500 |
| Residual chlorine (overhead sprinkler only) | mg/l | ≤1 | 1–5 | ≥5 |
| pH | | Normal range 6.5–8.4 | | |

1-4 Wastewater quality guidelines for agricultural use

More than 70% of fresh water is used worldwide for agriculture irrigation purposes (Stern *et al.*, 2020); some Arab countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt, UEA, Qatar, and Libya are considered as water–stressed countries because they impose a critical encumbrance on water supplies. In order to alleviate this stress on water resources, many researchers try to find surrogate solutions to enhance and develop the local market for sewage water to cover all agriculture irrigation needs (Alsharhan and Rizk *et al.*, 2020 and Li *et al.*, 2020). Despite the intensive endeavor to enhance and develop wastewater and to reuse it as a surrogate water resource for irrigation in the agriculture field, all attempts are still not commonly convenient in some developing countries like Saudi Arabia especially from the low reuse rate perspective (Drewes *et al.*, 2012; Khanpae *et al.*, 2020 and Zekri and Al-Maamari, 2020).

The lack of understanding of the wastewater treatment plants efficacy in eliminating pollutants leads to the aversion to reuse treated wastewater. In developing countries, there is general knowledge among the local public regarding the inefficient treatment processes in the WWTPs; that results in the deficient removal of microbial contaminants (e.g faecal indicators and pathogens) (El-Zanfaly, 2015 and Khanpae *et al.*, 2020). The badly treated wastewater has a negative effect on people who have direct exposure to it during vocational contact and on the irrigation field. Public consumers will be affected by insufficiently treated wastewater as they are indirectly exposed to it via consumption of the polluted produced food. In order to encourage people to use treated wastewater, it is necessary first to apply systematic monitoring efforts towards effective treatment of local WWTP, and to estimate any possible microbial risk contamination resulting from using retreated wastewater. Conventional water quality parameters are generally used to assess treatment effects that involved the abundance of coli form and heterotrophic bacterial counts (Cabral, 2010; Mara, 2013).

1-5 Water quality guidelines for maximum crop production

In many countries all over the world, excreta and sludge which is the land application of wastewater is considered as a common practice with an old classic tradition. Animal excrements have been used by farmers in China as fertilisers for centuries. Mediterranean civilisations and northern European used sewage sludge and wastewater just as manure. For example, in Valencia Huertas and Milanese Marcasites, the wastewater was reused for a long time in the 14th and 15th centuries, respectively (Tadesse, 2014).

The agriculture field in many North American and European cities was the main receptor for all disposal wastewater before wastewater treatment technology was developed to ban the contaminants of other water bodies. In some countries like Paris, the use of a certain partially extent degree for treated wastewater was widespread until the 1950s (Jimenez *et al.*, 2010). Wastewater has been used as an exporter of crop food nutrients over the last ten decades especially in developing countries, for example, Egypt, Peru, China, Lebanon, Mexico, India, Vietnam, and Morocco (Jimenez and Asano, 2008 and Kog, 2020) Consequently, crop production and land application continued using untreated wastewater in the agriculture field for centuries (Keraita *et al.*, 2008 and Abdelhafez *et al.*, 2020). Nevertheless, over the years, untreated wastewater for irrigation in developed countries becomes less popular as a result of the massive improvement of treatment technologies and commoncautions raising awareness of health risk and environmental issues related directly to this practice.

On the other hand, in the Middle East and in some developed countries, the lack of physical and financial resources required to treat wastewater led to the uncontrolled and unplanned wastewater use, besides, the context of urbanization, and the socio-economic situation. The Comprehensive Assessment of Water Management in Agriculture conducted a study that covered more than 53 cities from the developed countries; the study considered the main drivers of treated wastewater in agriculture particularly in the irrigation field (Raschid-Sally and Jayakody, 2009):

1. The contamination of water bodies, soils, and traditional irrigation water sources caused by shortages in developed countries capacities to control wastewater treatment.
2. Deficiency of surrogate (obtainable or harmless, similarly trustworthy, cheaper) water exporter in the physical environment.
3. The demand for urban food and market motivations favoring food production in the in the closeness of cities, where water exporter is generally contaminated.

Furthermore, the level of the household regarding the influence of the socio-economic factors directly affects the quality of wastewater; for example, low education and poverty in developing countries, where inadequate job chances and lack knowledge for health risk consciousness coexist (Jimenez *et al.*, 2010; Coelho *et al.*, 2020). The reused wastewater under such circumstances can represent a willing opportunity to enhance food supply and cash crop production. The population is the end user for all the produced food derived from irrigation by treated wastewater and they gauge its advantages. It is hard to modify people life performance particularly when these changes are connected to historical water rights or cost. This might be changed by decreasing the accessibility of freshwater resources, be it for physical or economic reasons.

One of the important factors that drive farmers to use treated wastewater for irrigation is the inherited recognition for the nutrient value of sludge and raw wastewater. Nonetheless, in most of the developed countries, recycling and reusing water are progressively seen as a responded method to actual water shortage (involving drought control and management in addition to climate change) water reorganizations from irrigation means in agriculture field to other uses and also as a cost-effective answer to expensive inter-basin transfers. These strict standards of the environment are considered as an additional factor affecting wastewater recycling, which makes sludge and land application of treated wastewater unavoidable together and economically more practical. The reuse of agricultural drivers of excreta and sludge is more connected to removal issues than to the actual intention of claiming components.

On the other hand, many farmers count them as a worthy fortune that is close to farmyard manure. This advantageous use is progressively increasing; it is driven by the intention of the closed loops of nutrients that confirm the improvement in soil fertility by returning all nutrients to agricultural land. In most cultures, excreta and sludge were historically considered as harmful substances and shame objects to be used in any field spatially in agriculture. For this reason, the reuse of treated wastewater rather than sludge and excreta is more acceptable by farmers (LeBlanc *et al.*, 2009 and Kehrein *et al.*, 2020). Some Asian countries were the oldest references that used excreta in aquaculture to increase fish production (World Health Organization, 2006, Botta *et al.*, 2020).

In the last two decades, because of the densely populated areas that produce huge quantities of sludge and excreta within a limited stockpiling space, it is not possible for the environment to naturally assimilate and control the sludge, which became an important issue, especially for the developed countries (Haque, 2020). In fact, controlling excreta is a hard task especially when there is a shortage of social people support. Most people favor to avoid what might

occur to excreta after discharging it off into latrines; they felt annoyed if it is brought back to their thinking, be it in developing or developed countries (Jimenez *et al.*, 2010 and Ahmadi *et al.*, 2020). Although, from all the information that was revealed above, an effort was made as shown in Table five below to display a widespread image of the current use of wastewater, excreta and sludge across the world employing the best leading obtainable data.

Table 5: Some characteristics from countries using wastewater for irrigation (Jimenez *et al.*, 2010)

| Use of wastewater for irrigation | Total number of countries | GDP per capita for the 50% of the countries (in US\$) | Sanitation coverage for the 50% of the countries (in %) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Untreated | 23 | 880-4800 | 15-65 |
| Treated and untreated | 20 | 1170-7800 | 41-91 |
| Treated | 20 | 4313-19800 | 87-100 |

1-6 Health protection measures in aquacultural use of wastewater

Numerous authors have exerted efforts to supply a guideline for health protection measures for waste water claim and use (e.g. Helmecke *et al.*, 2020). However, none of these has been standardised or taken up globally. In spite of explaining wastewater reuse, the expressions indirect, direct, unplanned, and planned are repeated commonly. These are described here with examples:

- Direct use of untreated wastewater indicates the use of raw sewage which is disposed from WWTP; it is used for crop production where it is directly disposed of on the land.
- Indirect use of untreated sewage points to the concept of normally diluted wastewater (or contaminated stream water) which is used for irrigation purposes. This is widespread especially the downstream of urban centres where most of the treatment services are inadequate. In fact, farmers might realise that the challenge comes from the quality of water that they used to use.
- Direct use of reclaimed wastewater designates the use of treated water that has been moved from the treatment stage to the use stage without the interference of the drainage to waters.

Planned water reuse signals the awareness and managed use of wastewater both raw (direct) and diluted (indirect). Most of the indirect use occurred without previous planning and this could be explained by using low-quality water.

Usually, in dry climates, the direct use of wastewater takes place especially when water sources are rare. Treated, untreated or moderately treated sewage water is used directly in agriculture (for irrigation purposes) without diluting or mixing them. The direct use of treated wastewater is widespread as a planned technique in developing countries including some larger parts of North African and the Middle East area (Alsharhan and Rizk 2020). However, the unplanned action can also take place in dry seasons; for example, when the wastewater is carried by streams, like the River Musi in India. However, diluted wastewater that is used in agriculture (indirect use) is significantly more often used than its direct use and that happens even more in special climates like the wetter climates. In these conditions, partially/insufficiently treated or untreated wastewater from urban areas is disposed of directly into drains, tributaries of the larger water bodies and small streams with fresh water and storm water usually mixed; both were diluted wastewater (or contaminated surface water). Afterwards, it was used by most traditional users who are farmers.

The shortage of satisfactory sanitation and waste outlet infrastructure in large cities is one of the direct and crucial reasons of such contamination and use (Schellenberg *et al.*, 2020 and Visanji *et al.*, 2020). This is not exclusive to Middle Eastern countries (the low-income ones) because of the deficiency in collecting and treating sewage water covering all treatment aspects. However, that also happens in developed countries (fast-growing economies); for example, Brazil, China and some of North Africa area. Despite the huge progress in wastewater treatment investments, the generated wastewater in the city of Beijing is half treated and the untreated wastewater is disposed of into water streams as the farmers used downstream (Al Omari, 2020; Alsharhan and Rizk, 2020). In addition, in some middle eastern countries like Palestine and Lebanon, the nearby rivers, seas, and *valleys* are the end discharge point for all the wastewater which is collected from sewer localities, also on open land escape where it seeps into the ground with no or slight treatment (Alsharhan and Rizk, 2020; Brookset *et al.*, 2020 and Coelho *et al.*, 2020).

Despite the (EU) regulations which are considered too harsh and strict, some countries like Spain, Portugal, and Italy used untreated wastewater that is discharged of into rivers streams; later this water is used for irrigation purposes particularly in hot seasons like summer when the river flow is little (Alsharhan and Rizk, 2020).

Recently, the level of wastewater treatment has been increasing due to efforts made by some countries to meet EU legislations which initiated this practice; the use of untreated wastewater being reduced. In Turkey, because of the lack of satisfactory treatment and insufficient sewerage facilities, a huge amount of domestic wastewater is disposed into rivers and used later for irrigation (Nas *et al.*, 2020). In some countries, irrigation infrastructure was built to transfer fresh

water, groundwater or surface water which is recently used for wastewater during a specific time. The fresh water that is used for irrigation is supplemented by pumped wastewater into irrigation canals. For example, in Vietnam, the generated wastewater from Hanoi and other cities along the Red River Delta is driven into irrigation canals at a specific time of the year to enhance the quantity of irrigation water (Van Thanh *et al.*, 2020).

In contrast, in some other cities like Haroonabad in Pakistan and Hyderabad in India, wastewater may be the only water flowing in the canals especially at the tail end of the irrigation system or through in the dry season (Schellenberg *et al.*, 2020 and Haque, 2020). In Jordan, the domestic wastewater of the capital Amman is mainly treated in the As-Samra WWTP which is located in the southern part of Jordan Valley, the treated water is merged again with surface run-off from *valleys* before it is tentatively kept in the countries major reservoir with 75 million cubic meters storing capacity. Unfortunately, because the wastewater flow is increased, the detention time of the water in the reservoir is reduced from ten months to a few months.

First of all, diseases should be made known as they are connected to the pathogen nature inside the wastewater; consequently, this will change locally according to the pattern of the local public health. Secondly, farmers are not the only people who are facing the risks of these diseases. In fact, diseases can be detected in four different groups: crop handlers, regular customers of crops or milk and meat coming from cattle grazing on contaminated fields, workers in agriculture fields and their families and people who are living close to the areas where wastewater, excreta or sludge is found. Within these groups, the elderly and children are considered the most susceptible sections. Thirdly, there is a difference in the observed responses according to the developed and developing countries. This is due to pathogen concentrations and distributions that these groups are exposed to, which are very different because of the living circumstances and their resistance level to diseases between developed and developing countries (Orsini *et al.*, 2013 and Khanpae *et al.*, 2020). In fact, the food safety statistics are uncertain because of the low laboratory standards in most developing countries.

The crops are mainly contaminated with pathogens via direct contact. However, some cases of uptake by plants have been recorded (Massoud *et al.*, 2019 and Wu, 2020). In addition to pathogens, sludge and wastewater can also be a provenance of the high level of the organic toxic compound and heavy metals (Mahmood and Malik, 2014; Alegebeleye and Sant'Ana, 2020).

Pollution happens, in the case of organic chemicals and some metals, through soil absorbance, which substantially relies on the location (potential pollution sources), conditions of the environment (specifically the soil), bio-availability (in the case of some pollutants), type of agricultural and plant practices (irrigation method and quantity of water applied) (Mahmood and Malik, 2014 and Brooks *et al.*, 2020).

There is comparatively good awareness of the admissible quantities of heavy metals that soil and crops can be exposed to when sludge, wastewater or biosolids are utilised in soil (Lente *et al.*, 2014). Additionally, for developing and developed countries both, heavy metals content in wastewater, sludge and excreta from domestic origin are commonly quite low to permit their usage for crop fertilisation (Orsini *et al.*, 2013 and Abdelhafez *et al.*, 2020). Nonetheless, constantly there are cases where caution needs to be taken; for instance, near mining or tanneries areas (Brooks *et al.*, 2020). The risks stemming from direct pesticide usage is in common much higher than the risks coming from organic components that exist in wastewater in contrast with the health risks; the pathogenic, pesticide levels of vegetables were deemed to be less important, even if they are high, in the context of a developing country (Wu, 2020). As pointed out above, wastewater usage, excreta and biosolids define risks rather than benefits. Considerably, the experts recommend treating wastewater, excreta and sludge 'properly' and simply prohibiting such unsafe practice.

CONCLUSION

In this article we reviewed the maintenance lack for the infrastructure of Rustumihia wastewater treatment plant. The disposed effluent from Rustumihia WWTP was used directly in irrigation by nearby farmers close to the WWTP. Therefore, a supreme degree of awareness and commitment is required by the farmers who are using this treated wastewater in agriculture as the use of the effluents will be reflected directly on people health as well as the environment. An integrated approach should be applied that includes cooperation between the government body and farmers representative in order to maintain the benefits and minimize the health risks. Iraqi farmers have a lack of knowledge for the long-term effects of the reuse of treated wastewater in irrigation. Ministry of water resources need to establish a clear policy for the reuse of treated wastewater and follow up the farmers with the new updates of world health organization and their guidelines for interpreting water quality that is used for irrigation. Hence, this could be implemented via training groups of skilled laboratory employees at various stages who are specialist to look for research work on wastewater reuse and focus on finding alternative methods to eliminate hazardous on environment and human health. Emphasize on increasing the awareness of the wastewater that is used for domestic or portable purposes by following the required standers for drinking water. In the other hand there are many fields that we can invest the treated wastewater in

it like, cooling the pipes of boiler in industrial uses, municipal uses for gardens, street cleaning and watering of road sides etc.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank MUSTANSIRIYAH UNIVERSITY (www.uomustansiriyah.edu.iq) Baghdad Iraq for its providing support in the current work.

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