



Eawag welcomes revision of the Epidemics Act

March 22, 2024 |

Topics: Wastewater | Society | Organisation & Staff

Eawag welcomes the planned revision of the Epidemics Act as part of the public consultation process. The amendments will improve cooperation between all stakeholders in order to protect the population even better against transmissible diseases and antibiotic resistance. The opinion of the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology particularly emphasises the holistic approach, which includes human, animal and environmental health.

According to Eawag Director Martin Ackermann, the One Health approach in the proposed revision of the Epidemics Act (EpidA) "considers human and animal health as well as the effects from the environment together". It is therefore particularly effective.

Include wastewater as a sample type

During the coronavirus pandemic, Eawag played a leading role in establishing the nationwide monitoring of epidemiological indicators in wastewater. The data obtained provided important insights into the viral load of the population, the spread pattern of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the circulation of problematic virus variants. The approach proved to be one of the most efficient methods for managing the pandemic and has since become an integral part of the federal government's national wastewater monitoring programme. Eawag therefore believes that wastewater should be included as a sample type in the list of materials for genome analyses in the EpG.

Tracking the development of resistance

Eawag also suggests that the monitoring of resistance in wastewater should be included in the law on an equal footing with the monitoring of transmissible diseases and the consumption of antimicrobial

substances. The law should also be formulated flexibly enough to allow new measures to be taken to maintain the effectiveness of antimicrobial substances in the event of new findings on the development of resistance or resistance mechanisms.

Letter from Eawag to the Federal Office of Public Health and Eawag's detailed [consultation response to the revision of the EpG](#) [pdf, available in German only].

Cover picture: Frozen wastewater samples for analysis for SARS-CoV-2 virus material.
(Photo: Keystone, Gaetan Bally)

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Consultations

Further Eawag responses to federal consultations

<https://www.eawag.ch/en/info/portal/news/news-detail/eawag-welcomes-revision-of-the-epidemics-act>