

# Health aspects within the EU water framework directive (WFD)



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## Study side

Catchment area of Wupper river, Germany



## Aim of study

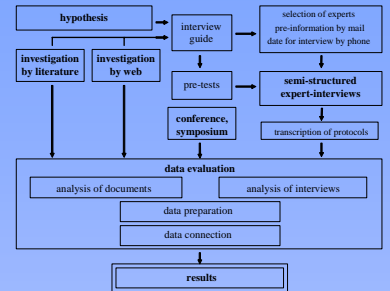
The potential intersections between water protection and health protection in practice should be identified. Therefore, the role of human health in association with water-related planning was focused.

## Focus question

Is the WFD's target goal of a "good ecological condition" of water bodies always suitable for human health?

## Methods

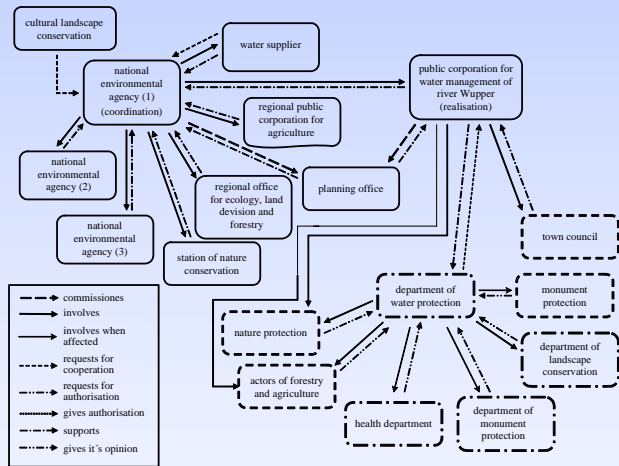
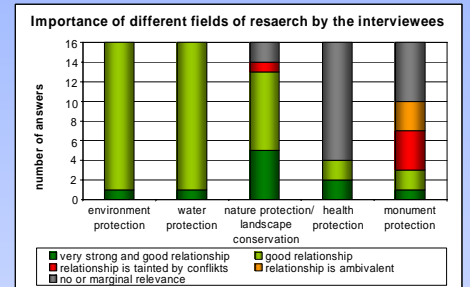
Expert interviews and literature analysis



## Results

Where human health is implemented in the WFD from the actor's point of view

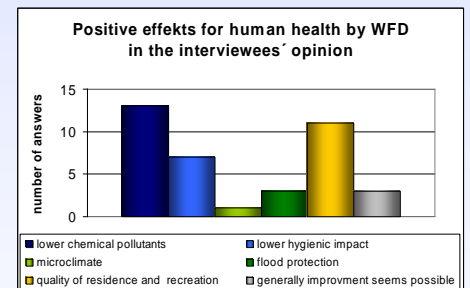
- ... WFD is not active health protection
- ... (priority) hazardous substances because of toxicity
- ... classification of water bodies as „heavily modified“ e.g. concerning drinking water
- ... Water quality because of various uses and floods



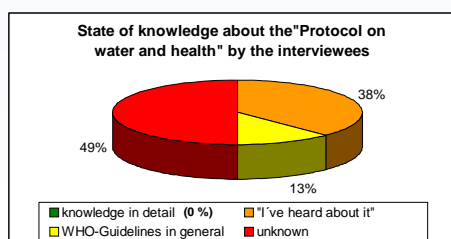
Negative effects for human health caused by WFD from the actor's point of view:

- ... not imaginable / not licensable
- ... neglect of other health-related aspects
- ... inaccessibility of waterbodies due to wilderness / isolation
- ... mosquitos in areas of stagnant water (e.g. risk of malaria)
- ... flooding (overflow of buildings)

An important barrier for real multidisciplinary water management that also deals with human health seems to be the strict stereotyped thinking of many actors. They are either not able or not willing to work together.



## Possibilities to integrate human health within the WFD:



- ... breaking existing structures of responsibility leads to more interdepartmental, interdisciplinary cooperation and finally to more sustainability
- ... involving health experts more often and systematically in water management decisions
- ... implementing a "social monitoring" additionally to the ecological monitoring which considers the people's regional different perception for forming the monetary value of water claimed in the WFD
- ... adding the parameter "health-related water microbiology" to the validation of a "good ecological condition" to prevent infections
- ... spreading the knowledge about the WHO-Protocol on Water and Health