

Menstrual Knowledge and Hygiene Management of Adolescent Girls

ABSTRACT

The study measured the menstrual knowledge and hygiene practices of adolescent girls of low socio income group. Purposive sampling method was used for the selection of study participants. A self-developed Questionnaire was used to ~~measure and analyze the collect data on~~ knowledge and hygiene practices among the adolescent girls. ~~The present research aimed to study the menstruation knowledge among adolescent girls and practices of hygiene that they followed during menstruation. Results showed that the levels of knowledge regarding the menstrual health is low among the adolescent girls. Menstruation is clouded in surrounded by social taboos was and never is never discussed in homes and hence the adolescent girls are ignorant about it. They accidentally discover and experience menstruation as it happens before they actually experience it. It is~~ This study emphasized the ~~a prerequisite and a forright for~~ adolescent girls to have accurate and adequate knowledge about menstruation and its appropriate related hygiene practices ~~to be maintained~~. Further, there exists a positive correlation between menstrual knowledge and hygiene management by adolescent girls which clearly indicates that if the menstrual knowledge ~~of the adolescent girls~~ increases ~~among adolescent girls~~, then there can be improvement in the hygiene practices as well by the same group.

KEYWORDS

Adolescent, Knowledge, Hygiene, Menarche, Menstruation,

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a unique phase of human development that spreads between the ages of 10 and 19 years. Accelerated growth in reproductive organs is the most significant change during the adolescent period. The girls attain puberty and their menstrual cycle starts. Menstruation is a normal and unique phenomenon to the females. ~~Studies have revealed that adolescent girls have incomplete and inaccurate knowledge about menstruation and hygiene. Menstruation knowledge and its hygiene practices are surrounded with socio cultural taboos and hence adolescent girls are ignorant of the scientific practices, facts and hygienic health practices, which sometimes result in adverse health outcomes. The knowledge and practices related to menstruation are dependent on socio economic conditions as well [1]. Hygienic practices of women during menstruation are of considerable importance, otherwise they could be as they have a serious health complications and also reproductive tract infections. Good hygienic practices such as the use of sanitary pads, frequently changing pads and adequate washing of the genital area are essential during menstruation. The~~ Menstruation knowledge and hygiene practices are rarely discussed at home or in schools, because of the phenomenon being clouded by taboos and social restrictions. Lack of information ~~for given to~~ adolescent girls about the menstruation knowledge and the hygienic practices ~~to be followed~~, leads to adverse health outcomes like reproductive tract infection, ~~and~~ UTIs, ~~etc.~~ Unhygienic menstrual practices and management among adolescent girls increase susceptibility to infection. ~~It was therefore considered as relevant to~~ The study investigated the menstruation related knowledge and practices among the adolescent girls ~~in Hyderabad district in India. (place and country). The relationship data about their level of knowledge and the practices which are followed by them with respect to menstruation are important to find any association between between menstrual knowledge and hygiene management will be further interrogated. Hence, the present study was carried out to find out menstrual knowledge and hygiene and their association.~~

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The descriptive study was carried out in Hyderabad, district in (India.) It mainly focused on the low socio economic households as these constitute the most vulnerable group in India. A variety of factors are known to affect menstrual behaviors, the most influential ones being economic status

of households. A total of 60 respondents were selected through a purposive sampling technique. A questionnaire, structured and closed ended questions were used to capture data on assess the menstruation knowledge levels and hygiene practices of the adolescent girls of low socio income groups. Informed consents were obtained from the parents and assents for the participation. Participation was entirely voluntary and confidentiality was ensured. The knowledge questions consisted of questions such as process of menstruation, cause, source, duration of menstruation along with menarche. The hygiene practice questions included use of absorbent material during in menstruation, about personal hygiene during menstruation, and frequency of changing pads. The information collected was tabulated and statistically analyzed by using percentages, frequencies and correlations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Menstruation Process Knowledge

Table 1 Knowledge levels on the process of menstruation amongst Adolescent Girls

n=60

Menstruation process is a	Frequency	Percentage
Physiological process	14	23.33%
Pathological process	4	6.66%
Don't know	42	70.00%
Cause of Menstruation		
Hormones	32	53.33%
Caused by the disease	8	13.33%
Don't know	20	33.33%
Source of Menstrual blood		
Uterus	4	6.66%
Vagina	16	26.00%
Don't know	40	66.66%
Duration of Normal Menstrual cycle		
20-28 days	20	33.33%
28-40 days	4	6.66%
Don't know	36	60.00%
Heard about Menstruation before attaining menarche		
Yes	6	10.00%
No	54	90.00%

The above table indicates that about 3/4 of the adolescent girls in the study "Don't know" what menstruation process is. 23.33% of adolescent girls pointed out that menstruation is physiological process and 6.66 % indicated that menstruation is pathological process. Physiological process refers to the process that occurs naturally in the human body, this process is the vital function for the human body. On the other hand, pathological process refers to the disease due to invasion of the body by pathogenic microorganisms and their multiplication which can lead to tissue damage and disease. The above figures give a clear idea that adolescent girls are not aware of the menstruation process and why it occurs does it occur to them.

Majority (53.33%) of the adolescent girls were aware of the fact that menstruation process is caused by hormonal process in the female human body. Hormones are the chemical messenger of the body. It was depressing to note that 13.33% of the adolescent girls in the study believed that menstruation is caused by a disease. As much as 33.33% of the adolescent girls did not know the cause of menstruation. 66.66% of adolescent girls "Don't know" the source of menstruation blood. This figure indicates that menstrual knowledge is poor among the adolescent girls, probably because no proper information channels are available for them. Menstruation is still a social taboo in this our society. This might be because nobody talks much about the menstruation, even at household or school level.

84 | There is gap in the educational system in India, where reproductive health is not taught because
 85 | either it is considered non-important or unsocial. It is assumed that knowledge regarding menstruation
 86 | will come gradually by its own.

87 | The duration of normal menstruation cycle of 20-28 days was indicated correctly by less than
 88 | 50 % of the adolescent girls. Menstrual cycle is the normal 28 day cycle of the girls who have attained
 89 | menarche. This normal cycle indicates the normal and healthy life of the girls. This cycle is the normal
 90 | cycle of all females

91 | Prior information about menarche before they actually experience it was not available to 90%
 92 | of the adolescent girls. 10% had heard about menarche and menstruation cycle before they actually
 93 | experienced it. The prior information is not given to adolescent girls before they actually experience it
 94 | because of the social taboos and beliefs that still prevail in Hyderabad district, the society.
 95 | Menstruation is still not discussed openly. Thakre et al [8] found that only 36.95% of the girls were
 96 | aware of menstruation before menarche. The major source of information about menstruation was
 97 | their mothers. More than three fourth-quarters of the girls in the study were not aware of the cause
 98 | and the source of menstrual blood, the bleeding.

99 | Mahajan and Kaushal [4] pointed out that that 29% of adolescent girls had adequate
 100 | knowledge about menstrual hygiene, and 71% had inadequate knowledge about menstrual hygiene.
 101 | Composite practice scores showed that 19%, 69%, and 12% samples had poor, fair, and good score
 102 | of practices regarding menstrual hygiene, respectively. Results indicate that it was further pointed that
 103 | there is a significant positive association between good knowledge of menstruation and educational
 104 | status of the mother only. (elaborate a bit)

Menstrual Hygiene Practices

Table 2. Practices regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls

n=60

Statements	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Uses absorbent materials during menstruation	60	100	–	–
Uses commercially made sanitary pad as absorbent material during menstruation	24	40.00	44	73.33
Clean clothes with soap and water	30	68.00	14	31.81
Dry cloths in sunlight	28	63.36	16	36.36
Changing pads or cloths more than three times and above during menstruation	20	33.33	40	66.66
Do you change /reuse the cloth for every cycle	28	46.66	32	53.33
Disposes used sanitary pads in dustbin	34	56.66	26	43.33
Uses paper to dispose the pads by wrapping	18	30.00	42	70.00
Takes bath daily with soap during menstruation	36	60.00	24	40.00
Clean external genitalia during menstruation	32	53.33	28	46.66
During Menstrual cycle, I use undergarment separately	8	13.33	52	86.66

Table 2 shows reveals menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls. All the adolescent girls in the study used absorbent cloth during their menstrual cycle.

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111 ~~periods.~~ The commercially available pads were used by
112 only 40 % of the adolescent girls while ~~and~~ more than half
113 (60%) adolescent girls used old clothes during their
114 periods. Use of the old clothes by the majority of the
115 adolescent girls was due to affordability and accessibility
116 challenges. Sharma *et al* [7] found that majority of the girls
117 preferred cloth pieces rather than sanitary pads as
118 menstrual absorbents. Apparently, poverty, high cost of
119 disposable sanitary pads and to some extent ignorance
120 discouraged the girls from using the menstrual
121 absorbents available in the market. Thakur *et al* [9]
122 Sanitary napkins (either alone or along with reusable cloth)
123 are used by the majority (74.5%) of the young women. ~~But~~
124 it is surprising to see that in urban area almost 25%
125 participants are still using cloths. Obviously, due to the
126 poor socio economic conditions of many urban these
127 families, they cannot afford to purchase costly sanitary
128 napkins.

129 As much as 70.00% of the adolescent girls used soap and water to clean their used sanitary
130 pads. This figure is noteworthy and indicates some good practice among the adolescent girls. The A
131 majority of the adolescent girls (63.36%) dried the clothes in sunlight. 40% of adolescent driedy their
132 used sanitary clothes in shade because they feel shy and believe that if they dry in sunlight other
133 members will come to know about their menses periods. But still as much as 40.00% of adolescent
134 girls dried their used periods-menstrual clothes in hidden places because they did not want other
135 members to know about their periodsmenstrual cycles. The limited, inadequate knowledge about
136 menstruation might be the cause for the girls in the present study to feel embarrassed, anxious and
137 hence they did not dry their used clothes in sun.

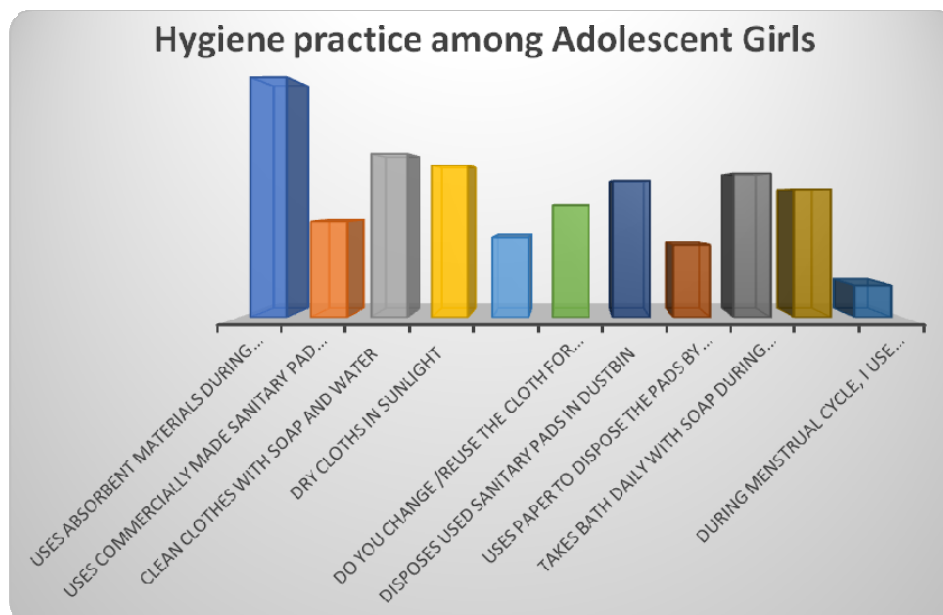
138 The..... percentages clearly indicated low hygiene practices among in the adolescent girls
139 which could be due to limited menstruation knowledge in adolescent girls. The Mmajority of the
140 adolescent girls did not change their pads or cloths more than three times or more during
141 menstruation. This result -and, hence-indicated low hygiene practices during menstruation. The
142 majority of the adolescent girls (56.66%) did not dispose used sanitary pads in dustbins. Moreover,
143 70.00% of the respondents did not wrap the pads with papers to dispose them. The majority of the
144 adolescent girls (86.66%), did not use undergarment separately for period during menstruation. This
145 finding is in line with the findings by of Fehintola *et al* [2] where majority the of respondents (
146 49.58%) disposed the absorbent material without wrapping it and disposed it in the toilet indicating
147 a poor hygiene practices during in menstruation.

148 Ramchandra *et al* [6] in their study in, noted that revealed that around 34% participants
149 were aware about of menstruation prior to their menarche, and that mothers were the main source of
150 information among both groups adolescent girls. Overall, 69% of adolescent girls were using sanitary
151 napkins as menstrual absorbents, while 6% used both cloth and sanitary napkins. Almost half of the
152 rural participants dried the absorbent cloth inside their rooms.

153 Varghese *et al* [10] pointed out the average level of menstrual hygiene practices was 75 %,
154 meaning proper menstrual hygiene was high in Factor analysis on menstrual hygiene showed

Comment [b1]: Not clear

155 highest scores on frequency of changing the pad, bath during menstruation, absorbent cloth used and
 156 access to water. Average level of hygiene practices was comparatively more among girls who
 157 belonged to higher socio-economic groups (Pvalue = 0.003) and those who had access to a covered
 158 toilet (P value = 0.000).



159

160 | **Figure.....**

161

162

163 **Table 3. Testing of Hypothesis**

164 **Null Hypothesis**

165 There will be no association between menstrual health knowledge and hygiene practices of
 166 adolescent girls.

167 **Alternate Hypothesis**

168 There will be a significant association between menstrual health knowledge and hygiene practice of
 169 adolescent girls.

170

		Knowledge	Hygiene Practices
Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.626	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N		
Hygiene practice	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		

*significant at 0.05% level of probability

Fig 4aTable 3: Association between menstruation knowledge and hygiene practice in adolescent girls

An inference could be drawn from the above table that knowledge about menstruation and menstrual hygiene practice have a positive correlation with each other, This correlation clearly indicates that if the menstrual knowledge of the adolescent girls increases that there can be improvement in the hygiene practices of the adolescent girls.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main problem areas identified in this study were poor knowledge of menstruation, and hygiene practices. This study emphasized the prerequisite for adolescent girls to have accurate and adequate knowledge about menstruation and its appropriate hygiene practices to be ~~intensified~~ maintained. Formal as well as informal channels of communication such as mothers, sisters and friends need to be empowered for the delivery of such knowledge- [5].

Inadequate menstrual knowledge, results in poor menstrual hygiene by the adolescent girls. Menstrual education should be included in School curriculum to raise awareness ~~for on~~ f healthy hygiene practices ~~during in~~ menstruation. Menstrual health is an important part of the life cycle approach to women's health, so loud and clear messages and services on this issue must reach adolescent girls.

There is a need to provide skills among the adolescent girls for safe and healthy hygienic practices and to make appropriate choices enabling them to lead ~~a~~ healthy reproductive lives and prevent the risk for reproductive tract infections. Mothers and teachers ~~should to~~ function as primary sources of information on menstruation including reproductive health. Education has been the key stone in propagating menstrual hygiene practices. Menstrual education can be conducted by non-governmental organizations, health workers and ~~other relevant~~ government ~~agencies, organization~~. As the mothers are the primary informant for the adolescent girls, menstrual health education should also be imparted to them.

Strategies such as supply of cheap and affordable sanitary napkins, access to water, sanitation, hygiene of external genitalia and access to covered toilets are still deficient and ~~these~~ # plays a major role in promoting the adoption of safe menstrual hygiene practices. Subsidies should be given on sanitary napkins to make it more affordable.

Kotian et al [3]pointed that It is very important that lower socio-economic groups should be educated about the importance of maintaining hygiene during menstruation by proper health education ~~and~~ equip them with skills regarding safe and hygienic practices to prevent the risk for reproductive tract infections.

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