



## Knowledge and Practice regarding menstrual hygiene among nursing students and their socio demographic correlates

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### ABSTRACT

*A descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge and practice of menstrual hygiene among Nursing Students at Sree Gokulam Nursing College. Data were collected from 150 Nursing Students recruited by convenience sampling technique. Semi-structured questionnaire used for data collection which is developed by investigators. Informed consent was obtained from study participants. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results show that majority of subjects (92%) having adequate level of knowledge and more than half of the subjects (57.3%) having good practices of menstrual hygiene. There was a significant association between educational level and knowledge of menstrual hygiene. However there was no association between practice and selected socio-personal variables.*

**KEYWORDS :** Knowledge, practice, menstrual hygiene, nursing students

### Introduction:

Menstruation describes the female period. The menstruation cycle begins when a woman gets her periods. The first menstruation also called as 'Menarche' is an indicator of developmental maturation in women whose arrival determines the transition from being a child to being a teenager. A variety of factors are known to affect menstrual behaviors, the most influential being economic status and residential status (urban and rural). Awareness regarding the need for information about healthy menstrual practices is very important. It is essential to design a mechanism to address and for the access of healthy menstrual knowledge. Menstruation and menstrual practices are still associated with some taboos and socio-cultural restrictions. Special health care needs and requirements of women during monthly cycle of menstruation are collectively given the term "Menstrual hygiene". Even Nursing Students also had shown poor practices on menstrual hygiene. Sometimes this may due to lack of essential facilities in respective Nursing schools or Colleges.

Good hygienic practices such as the use of sanitary pads and adequate washing of the genital area are essential during menstruation. Women and girls of the reproductive age need access to clean and soft, absorbent sanitary products which can in the long run, protect their health. A key priority for women and girls is to have the necessary knowledge, facilities and the cultural environment to manage menstruation hygienically and with dignity.

A study was conducted by (Kirk J.S, 2005) on menstruation and awareness; critical issues for girls education. Lack of sanitary protection during menstruation is often mentioned as a barrier to girl's regular attendance in school. In many poor families providing adequate clothing for the whole family can be a challenge. Insufficient (or) inadequate sanitary protection can be a very embarrassing for a girl attending the school during her monthly period.

Jain Akanksha et al conducted a study on menstrual hygiene awareness among rural unmarried girls of selected community. Results obtained was only 40% percentage of them are aware of the good hygienic practices during menstruation.

A study was conducted by Rajashree R. Kamble (2001) on knowledge and practice of menstruation and menstrual hygiene among school girls. The findings of the study showed that 61.66% of the girls had an average knowledge regarding menstruation on menstrual hygiene

and 87.66% of the girls following correct practices.

Many studies have revealed that most of the adolescent girls had incomplete and inaccurate information about the menstrual physiology and hygiene. It also revealed that mothers, television, friends, teachers and relatives were the main sources which provided information on menstruation to the adolescent girls. Good hygienic practices such as the use of sanitary pads and adequate washing of the genital area are essential during menstruation. Women and girls of the reproductive age need access to clean and soft, absorbent sanitary products which can in the long run, protect their health. A key priority for women and girls is to have the necessary knowledge, facilities and the cultural environment to manage menstruation hygienically and with dignity. Very few studies have included the detailed aspects of the menstrual practices among adolescent girls. It was therefore considered as relevant to investigate the menstruation related knowledge and practices among the school going adolescent girls. The data about their level of knowledge and the practices which are followed by them with respect to menstruation are beneficial for planning a program for improving the awareness level with respect to their life processes and promoting their quality of life. Hence, the present study was carried out.

### Materials and Methods:

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge and practice of menstrual hygiene among nursing students at Sree Gokulam Nursing College. Quantitative approach is used and 150 samples are selected through convenience sampling method.

Self-reported data were collected from subjects by administering a validated (three experts) semi-structured questionnaire to assess the knowledge and practice regarding menstrual hygiene. It consisted of three sections.

Section A on socio-personal data, section B for knowledge assessment (consisted of ten items with a maximum score of ten), and section C for observation of practice regarding menstrual hygiene (consisted of ten items with a maximum score of ten). Permission was obtained from concerned authorities. Informed written consent was obtained from participants. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential (chi-square test) statistics.

**Results:****Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to level of knowledge**

(n= 150)

| Level of knowledge | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Good               | 138           | 92.0           |
| Average            | 12            | 8.0            |
| Poor               | 0             | 0              |

Table 1 shows that majority of subjects (92%) having adequate level of knowledge and only 8% has average knowledge.

**Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of subjects according to level of practice on menstrual hygiene**

(n= 150)

| Level of practice | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Good              | 86            | 57.3           |
| Average           | 63            | 42.0           |
| Poor              | 1             | 00.7           |

Table 2 illustrates that most of the subjects (57.3%) have good level of practice, 42% have average level of practice and only 0.7% have poor level of practice.

Chi square test was used to compute association between knowledge level and selected socio demographic variables of the subjects, it showed that there was a significant association between educational level and knowledge ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Discussion:**

This study reports majority of subjects (92%) having adequate level of knowledge and only 8% have average knowledge .Most of the subjects (57.3%) have good level of practice, 42% have average level of practice and only 0.7% have poor level of practice. There was a significant association between educational level and knowledge ( $p < 0.001$ ).

The study results have been supported by the findings of Neelima Bhole in her study that there was high significant association between knowledge and practice scores with the standards of study among adolescent girls, as well as mother's education.

The similar study conducted by Rajashree R. Kamble showed that 61.66% of the girls had an average knowledge regarding menstruation on menstrual hygiene and 87.66% of the girls following correct practices.

Menstruation is regarded as something not clean in the Indian society. Most of the mothers are embarrassed to give information regarding menstrual hygiene. So it is inevitable to provide health education regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene among nursing students also. So health personnel should conduct seminars, workshops regarding importance of practicing good menstrual hygiene.

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