



A STUDY ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE & PRACTICES AMONG TRIBAL ADOLESCENT SCHOOL GIRLS OF BASTAR, CHHATTISGARH (INDIA)

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ABSTRACT

Background:- Menstruation is a usual physiological process generally considered as unhygienic in the Indian society. A negative attitude is reinforced toward this occurrence often resulting in socio cultural boundaries being imposed on menstruating girls, and many unhygienic practices during menstruation are linked with Reproductive tract infection and Urinary tract infections.

Objectives:- To assess the knowledge regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls of rural tribal area and find out practices of menstrual hygiene.

Methodology:- A community based, cross-Sectional observational study was conducted among adolescent girls residing at ASHRAM in rural tribal area. Pre designed semi-structured questionnaire were administered to collect information. 11-19 years of students were taken as study subject. Data were analyzed by MS excel 2007.

Result:- Out of total 186 Adolescent girls 34.4% were aware about menstruation prior to attainment of menarche, and mother and friends play the key role in providing information, and out of which 36% knew about menstrual hygiene. 76.8% respondents were using sanitary pads during menstruation, 10.7% used clothes and 11.8% using clothes and both (clothes ,pad) respectively. The reason for school absenteeism was attributed to pain during menstruation by 4.3% of the girls. 89.7% clean external genitalia during menstruation and after each use of toilet. 11.8% of girls reported restrictions from eating foods (sour foods) and 18.8% were restricted from playing with friends

Conclusion:- Hygienic practice among school girls in rural area were unsatisfactory . Education about proper hygienic practices will change the misconceptions and restrictions imposed regarding menstruation.

KEYWORDS : Menstrual hygiene, Adolescent girls, Knowledge, Education

INTRODUCTION

WHO has defined Adolescence as the period between 10- 19 years of life. (1) According to United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), there are 243 million adolescents comprising 20% of the total population of India which clearly shows that India is truly "young".(2) This sheer number itself is a big challenge in itself; 15-19 years constitute 10% and majority lives in rural areas. Menarche marks the commencement of a multitude of physical, physiological, and psychological transforms in the lives of the adolescent girls.

Menstruation is still gazed at as something unclean or dirty in Indian society and it is strongly related with misapprehension and cultural limitations. (3)

Knowledge about hygiene during menstruation is a vital aspect of health education for adolescent girls as blueprint that are developed in adolescence are likely to persist into adult life.(4)

Adolescent girls often are halfhearted to discuss this topic with their parents and often be indecisive to seek help regarding their menstrual problems. Hygiene-related practices of women during menstruation are of considerable importance, as it has a health impact in terms of increased susceptibility to reproductive tract infections (RTI). Many studies have revealed that most of the adolescent girls had deficient and imprecise information about the menstrual physiology and hygiene. Good hygienic practices such as the use of sanitary pads and adequate washing of the genital area are crucial during menstruation. Menstrual hygiene and management will directly contribute the millennium development goal (MDG-2) on universal education and MDG -3 on gender

equality and women empowerment. Menstrual hygiene is a precedence intervention under RMNCH +A strategy. (5) Hence taken into consideration of these facts this study was carried among adolescent girls residing in tribal area.

2. METHODS:-

A community based cross sectional study was conducted in ASHRAM where adolescent girls reside for their education. A total 186 adolescent girls were included in the study by convenient sampling method, after taking their verbal consent. Adolescent girls who were not attained menarche and those who not willing to participate were excluded from the study. Pre designed, pre tested, semi structured questionnaire was used to collect the information from the study participants. After explaining the purpose of the study information regarding demographic profile, menstrual awareness, and menstrual hygiene practices were obtained. Data analyzed in Microsoft- Excel and presented the information in percentage.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:-

Out of total 186 Adolescent girls 34.4% were aware about menstruation prior to attainment of menarche, and mother and friends play the key role in providing information, and out of which 36% knew about menstrual hygiene. 76.8% respondents were using sanitary pads during menstruation and 10.7%, 11.8% using clothes and both (clothes, pad) respectively. The reason for school absenteeism was attributed to pain during menstruation by 4.3% of the girls. 89.7% clean external genitalia during menstruation and after each use of toilet. 11.8% of girls reported restrictions from eating foods (sour foods) and 18.8% were restricted from playing with friend.

Knowledge about menarche / menstruation:-

In our study majority of the study participants are not aware about menarche / menstruation. 34.4% adolescent girls were heard about menstruation before attaining menarche.

Among 34.4% of girls, 36% had got information from mother and rest of them from friends, medias etc.

Cause of menstruation:-

None of the participants were aware that cause of menstruation was physiological. Most of them believed that menstruation was a disease and due to curse of god.

Material used during menstruation:-

It was found that 76.8% study participants used sanitary napkin, 10.7% used clothes and 11.8% used both during menstruation.

Disposal of pads:-

Majority of the participants throw pads in mud (54%), 30% wrap pads in paper and throw in mud, 12% wrap it in papers and throw in dustbin and 4% throw in dustbin without wrapping.

Dysmenorrhoea:-

52.6% had complained pain during menstruation and among them 4.3% had missed school due to pain.

Cleaning of external genitalia:-

Majority of the study participants (89.7%) clean their external genitalia daily. They use water and soap to clean the genitalia.

Restriction practices during menses:-

Restrictions during menstrual period were practiced which may be any kind in majority of the study participants. They were restricted from going to temple (98%), having spicy and sour food (11.8%) and playing with friends (18.8%) during menstruation.

CONCLUSION:-

Overall hygiene during menstruation was found adequate among study participants. Awareness about menstruation needed to be increased by intensive health education among adolescents. What is the cause and physiology of menstruation should be properly explained to adolescents through school campaigns. Overall prevalence of use of sanitary napkin was found adequate in this study and it should be increased by easy availability of sanitary napkins at affordable cost in respective areas. Stigma associated with menstruation, higher prevalence of restriction practices during menstruation looked-for to be diminished by IEC campaign and health education.

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