



KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE AND PRACTICES REGARDING MENSTRUAL CUP AMONG FEMALES IN A TERTIARY CARE CENTRE IN SOUTH KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Menstruation is a complex, coordinated biological process, and menstrual hygiene is a crucial component of women's health. The menstrual cup serves as an effective alternative to disposable menstrual products due to its reusability and eco-friendliness. **Objective:** The objective of this study is to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to menstrual cup usage among females visiting the outpatient department of a tertiary care institution. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was conducted to evaluate 115 women attending the Obstetrics & Gynecology outpatient department of a tertiary care facility. The participant was selected by a non-probability convenience sampling method. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed to evaluate knowledge about menstrual cups. **Result:** The research indicates that 74.8% of the participants possessed knowledge regarding menstruation cups. The primary reason for not utilizing a menstrual cup was the apprehension of insertion (34.8%), followed by challenges associated with insertion (27%). This study indicates that while 52.2% expressed a willingness to utilize menstrual cups, just 17.4% are presently utilizing them. **Conclusion:** The survey findings indicate that while a majority of individuals are aware of menstruation cups, most are hesitant to use them due to challenges associated with insertion and apprehension around the process.

KEYWORDS : Menstrual cup, menstruation, environment

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a complex, coordinated biological process, and menstrual hygiene is a crucial element of women's health. Various products designed to manage menstrual flow, including pads, towels, tampons, and menstrual cups, are classified as menstrual hygiene materials. ⁽¹⁾ Reproductive and urinary tract infections frequently occur in females with inadequate monthly hygiene and in women utilizing substandard menstrual products. ⁽²⁾ The selection of menstrual hygiene materials is influenced by various factors, including sociocultural considerations, comfort, and awareness of each product. Sanitary napkins are the most favored menstrual product in India because to their convenience, accessibility, and variety. Nonetheless, they represent a significant amount of solid waste, with an annual menstrual waste generation of 113 thousand tons in India. ⁽³⁾ Unsafe methods such as disposal through tossing, burning, burying, or flushing remain common, potentially causing severe environmental repercussions. Awareness and segregation among users within a large-scale enterprise, alongside the provision of infrastructure by local authorities for appropriate disposal and enhanced environmental safety. ⁽⁴⁾ The significance of the menstrual cup lies in its role as a viable alternative to throwaway menstruation products, as it is reusable and environmentally beneficial. Menstrual cups can accommodate between 10 and 38 ml of menstrual fluid. It is also user-friendly, since it may be effortlessly put into the vagina, serving as a container for blood. They consist of medical-grade silicone, rubber, latex, or elastomer and have a usage lifespan of up to 10 years ⁽⁵⁾. Insufficient awareness, apprehensions over leaking, perceived pain, limited availability, and inadequate advertising contribute to the declining popularity of menstruation cups, even among educated individuals. Therefore, this study seeks to evaluate the knowledge and attitudes of females concerning the use of menstruation cups and to investigate the experiences of participants who have utilized them. The study will illuminate the gaps in information and address the issues related to the use of menstruation cups.

Objective

This study aims to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding menstrual cup use among females in a tertiary care center in South Kerala

Methodology

- Cross sectional study
- **Study Setting:** Outpatient clinic of a tertiary care center in south Kerala
- **Study Period:** November 2023 to December 2023
- **Study Population:** Females visiting OBG OPD of a tertiary care center in south Kerala

Inclusion Criteria: -

- Patients willing for the study
- Patients aged between 12 and 50years

Exclusion Criteria: -

- Patients not willing for the study
- Patients who have attained menopause

Tools For Assessment

- Semi Structured Proforma
- Sociodemographic
- Clinical
- questionnaire regarding ⁽⁴⁻⁵⁾
- knowledge of the participants
- their attitude towards cups,
- experiences of the participants

RESULTS

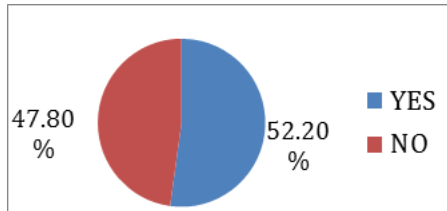
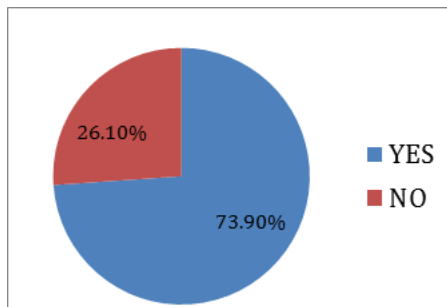
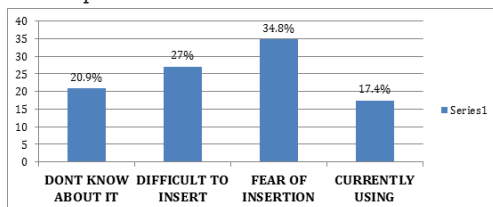
Table 1: Sociodemographic details of the participants

AGE	<25	27.8%
	26-35	25.2%
	36-45	27.8%
	>45	19.1%
EDUCATION	SSLC	21.7%
	PLUS TWO	26.1%
	DEGREE	52.2%
MARITAL STATUS	MARRIED	68.7%
	UNMARRIED	17.4%
	DIVORCED	6.1%
	WIDOW	7.8%
AREA	URBAN	44.3%
	RURAL	55.7%
OCCUPATION	EMPLOYED	61.7%
	UNEMPLOYED	38.3%

Table 2: Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding

menstrual cups

KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MENSTRUAL CUP	YES NO	74.8% 25.2%
MATERIAL OF MENSTRUAL CUP	SILICON RUBBER LATEX DON'T KNOW	52.2% 12.2% 2.6% 33.0%
REASON FOR NOT USING MENSTRUAL CUP	DON'T KNOW ABOUT IT DIFFICULT TO INSERT FEAR OF INSERTION CURRENTLY USING	20.9% 27.0% 34.8% 17.4%
WHO GAVE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MENSTRUAL CUP	FAMILY DOCTOR/NURSE FRIENDS MEDIA	4.3% 18.3% 33.0% 44.3%
WILLINGNESS TO USE	YES NO	52.2% 47.8%
USING OR NOT	YES NO	17.4% 82.6%
IS MENSTRUAL CUP SAFE	YES NO	73.9% 26.1%

**Figure 1:** Pie chart showing willingness to use menstrual cup**Figure 2:** Pie chart showing attitude regarding safety of menstrual cups**Figure 3:** Bar graph showing reasons for not using menstrual cup**DISCUSSION**

This was a cross-sectional study undertaken among females attending the outpatient department of a tertiary medical hospital in southern Kerala. A total of 115 ladies engaged in the study, and data was gathered using a questionnaire. The findings indicated that 17.4% of the participants utilized menstruation cups. The majority of participants have a comprehensive understanding of the cup's material. Despite the study indicating a favorable disposition among participants towards the cup, numerous problems with its utilization were noted, including challenges in insertion and apprehension over insertion, which were identified as the primary reasons for decreased usage of the cup. A study in Karnataka revealed that 80% of women of reproductive age

were familiar with the menstrual cup, aligning with the findings of our research.⁽⁶⁾ Another survey indicates that the majority of participants (73.7%) reported being unfamiliar with menstruation cups, whereas 26.3% acknowledged awareness of them. Only 2 of the 43 participants possessed adequate understanding of the menstrual cup, achieving a knowledge score of 12.⁽⁷⁾ In a comparable study, findings indicated that insufficient understanding (22.6%) and apprehension regarding insertion (56.2%) were the primary reasons for not utilizing a menstrual cup. Among the 350 study participants, 258 (73.7%) exhibited proficient knowledge scores, while 92 (26.3%) shown inadequate knowledge scores. Participants noted that discomfort and leakage were the primary issues encountered.⁽⁸⁾ In our study, the primary issues articulated were apprehension around the insertion of the cup and challenges associated with its usage. Numerous studies indicate that the utilization of menstruation cups becomes more manageable in consecutive cycles. A further study in Kerala demonstrated analogous findings, indicating that a growing number of participants found the menstrual cup increasingly user-friendly with repeated use. In the current study, the majority of participants exhibited hesitance in utilizing the cup, citing issues such as fear of insertion, challenges in utilization relative to sanitary pads, and perceived discomfort; yet, most acknowledged that the cup represents a superior alternative to sanitary pads. Mitigating these concerns through counseling and engaging menstrual cup users as peer educators can enhance acceptance of the cup and promote its continued use in the future.

CONCLUSION

Despite the majority of participants exhibiting a favorable disposition towards the safety and use of menstruation cups, the proportion of those who had actually utilized one was quite minimal. Numerous concerns with the cup must be resolved prior to its anticipated popularity. The predominant apprehension regarding the use of a menstrual cup was the fear of insertion. Additional concerns encompass insufficient understanding and challenges associated with insertion. The research underscores the necessity for education and advocacy about menstrual cups as a superior option to throwaway menstruation products.

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