



Menstrual Hygiene Among School Going Adolescent Girls in Urban Area: A Case Study

KEYWORDS

Adolescent girls, Menstrual hygiene, Health, Infection, reproductive Organ

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ABSTRACT

Aim : To assess the knowledge and the practices of menstrual hygiene among urban school going adolescent girls.

Methodology: The field area of 6 schools in and around chennai were selected by simple random sampling and all adolescent girls in that area were selected for study. Participants: 750 adolescent girls

Study tools and technique: A pre-designed, pretested and structured questionnaire was used in the study. The data collection technique was a personal interview of the study subjects.

Results: Age of attainment of menarche ranged from ten to sixteen years. Only 38.07% girls were aware regarding menstruation prior to the attainment of menarche. Mother was found to be the first source of information regarding menstruation in 61.60% of girls. 36.43% girls reported use of old cloth for protection during menstruation. 79.73% girls were restricted to attend religious occasions during menstruation.

INTRODUCTION

The menstruation is one of the most important changes occurring among girls during the adolescent period between 10-17 years of life. Adolescent period has been recognized as a special period in their life cycle that requires specific and special attention. Menstruation is a phenomenon unique to all females. (1.) It is still considered as something unclean or dirty in Indian society. (2) The first menstruation is often terrible and traumatic to an adolescent girl because it usually occurs without her knowing about it. (3). Many Adolescent girls often face serious health problems as a result of the strong parental bondage with traditional beliefs about menstruation. These girls suffer many gynaecological problems including infections of the reproductive organs as a result of poor personal hygiene and unsafe sanitary conditions.. So the present study was undertaken to study knowledge, status of hygiene and practices regarding menstruation among adolescent girls in an urban area.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The Field area is set up with 6 schools in and around chennai. total 750 adolescent girls were present in the study area. All unmarried, non-pregnant, non-lactating adolescent girls(10-17 years) with attainment of menarche were included in the study(n=672). A case study was carried out from may 2016 to october 2016. After obtaining informed consent, information regarding menstrual hygiene was recorded in predesigned pre-tested sheet.

RESULTS:

Out of total 750 adolescent girls, 612(81.6 %) girls have attained menarche. Maximum number of girls (72.38%) have attained menarche in the age ranged between 12-14 years. 13.39% girls have reported blood flow for more than 5 days. In 67.48% girls, menstrual cycle was of 28-32 days (Table- I). Only 38.07% girls were aware regarding menstruation prior to the attainment of menarche. In 61.60% of girls mother was found to be first source of information regarding menstruation. Teachers, friends and relatives were other sources of information (Table- II). 56.37% girls have reported use of sanitary pads during menstruation. 36.43% girls have reported use of old clothes during menstruation (Table-III). 79.73% girls were not allowed to attend religious occasions. 22.22% and 20.58% girls respectively were restricted from doing routine household work and playing (Table-IV).

TABLE-I Menstrual pattern in adolescent girls (n=612)

Pattern	Number (%)
Age at which menarche attained	
< 12	37(6.04)
12-14	443(72.38)
>14	132(21.56)
Duration of blood flow in days	
< 2	49(8.0)
3-5	481(78.59)
>5	82(13.39)
Length of cycle in days	
< 28	87(14.21)
28-32	413(67.48)
>32	112(18.30)
Quantity of blood flow	
Normal	491 (80.22)
Excessive	89(14.54)
Scanty	32(5.22)

TABLE-II Awareness regarding menstruation among adolescent girls

Awareness (n=612)	Number (%)
known	233(38.07)
unknown	379(61.92)
Source of information regarding menstruation	
Mother	377(61.60)
Teacher	83(13.56)
Friend	135(22.05)
Relative	17(2.78)

TABLE -III Practices of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls (n=612)

Type of protection used	Number (%)
Sanitary pads	345(56.37)
Old clothes	223(36.43)
Both	44(7.18)

TABLE- IV Restrictions practiced during menstruation among adolescent girls (n=612)

Restriction practiced for(multiple responses)	Number (%)
Religious occasions	488(79.73)
Routine household work	136(22.22)
Playing	126(20.58)
Attending school	72(11.76)
Certain types of foods	26(4.24)

DISCUSSION:

In the present study maximum number of girls have attained menarche between 12-14 years. Narayana et al(5) reported findings similar to present study. 76.65% girls have reported blood flow between 3-5 days. Balasubramanian(4) reported 84% girls had 3-5 days menstrual blood flow. Only 38.07% adolescent girls were aware about menstruation before attainment of menarche. This may be due to ignorance and low level of education among mothers of adolescent girls. Similar findings were reported by some authors.(4,7) In present study 61.60% girls reported mother as a first source of information. Close relation and better communication between mother and daughter may be the reason for present study finding. Singh et al(7) found in 64.9% girls mother was first source of information similar to the present study. 36.43% girls have reported use of old clothes during menstruation. Poverty, high cost of sanitary pads and ignorance may be the reasons for present finding. Few authors(3,7,8) found ignorance among girls regarding use of sanitary pads during menstruation similar to present study. A number of studies(3,4,5,8) reported different type of restrictions observed during menstruation similar to present findings.

CONCLUSIONS:

The result of the study revealed among the adolescent school girls the knowledge on menstruation is poor and the practices are often not optimal for proper hygiene. It is due to mothers of adolescent girls were ignorant about informing daughters about menstruation prior to menarche. All mothers irrespective of their educational status should be taught to break their inhibitions about discussing with their daughters regarding menstruation before age of menarche. Education regarding reproductive health and hygiene should be included as a part of school curriculum. Better hygienic practices can be adopted by making sanitary pads available at affordable prices. Awareness regarding the need for information on healthy menstrual practices is very important. It is essential to design a mechanism to address and for the access of healthy menstrual practices.

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