

## A KAP study on menstrual hygiene among Adolescent girls living in Urban slums of Guwahati City



### Gynaecology

**KEYWORDS:** KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, PRACTICES, MENSTRUAL HYGIENE.

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### ABSTRACT

**ABSTRACT:** Adolescence is period when boys and girls are kindled into a new sense of self. Faulty believes and practices pertaining to menstruation will affect health of large number of women in reproductive age. So the objective of the study is to assess the Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescents' girls residing in urban slums of Guwahati city

**METHODOLOGY:** The study was a community based cross sectional study. A total of 200 adolescent girls were interviewed using pre designed pre tested schedule.

**RESULT:** Out of the total 200 adolescents girls 35% were Hindu and 65% were Islam. About 65% are aware about menstrual process and only 17% adolescent girl use sanitary napkin.

**CONCLUSION:** The basic awareness regarding menstrual process is sufficient but still there were many taboos associated with menstrual process.

### Introduction

Adolescence is period when boys and girls are kindled into a new sense of self. This period can be difficult as it is full of anxiety and new emotions and especially in females it signifies the transition from girlhood to womanhood.<sup>1</sup> The physiological process of menstruation occurs throughout the reproductive age group of every women's life. Menarche marks the beginning of multitude of physical, physiological and psychological changes. People maintain very conservative attitude towards menstrual process in the society where Superstition, cultural and religious constrains are dominant.<sup>2</sup> The profile of women's reproductive health is greatly influenced by the girl's reaction to menarche, her believes and attitude towards menstruation and more importantly her behaviour during it. So faulty believes and practices pertaining to menstruation will affect health of large number of women in reproductive age. In India, menstruation and menstrual practices are clouded by taboos and socio-cultural restrictions for women as well as adolescent girls. Limited access to products for sanitary hygiene and lack of safe sanitary facilities could prove to be barriers to increased mobility and the likelihood of resorting to unhygienic practices to manage menstruation. Traditionally in India, it appears that there are some strategies: use of old clothes as pads by recycling them, and use of ash or straw, which offers no protection, and endangering menstrual hygiene with long term implications for reproductive health. So there's a need to generate awareness about safe menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls for prevention of RTI and future complications. So the objective of the study is to assess the Knowledge, attitude and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescents' girls residing in urban slums of Guwahati city

### Methodology:

The study was a community based cross sectional study. Guwahati city is the capital of Assam, the gateway to North Eastern India with a population of about 0.8 million. Among the total 99 notified slums of Guwahati City by the Municipal Corporation we took 10% of the slum by simple random sampling and from those 10 selected slums 20 adolescent girls from each slum were selected by snow ball sampling method which gave us a total sample size of 200 adolescent girls. The study was conducted from July to October 2016 by using pre designed pre tested schedule which contained both open and close ended questions. Data were compiled in excel sheet and analysed. Inclusion criteria were those girls in the age group of 10-19 years residing in the slum for a minimum of 3 months period, who gave consent were included and in case of minor consent was taken from legal guardian. Seriously ill and difficult to communicate adolescents girls were excluded

### RESULTS:

Out of the total 200 adolescents girls 35% were Hindu and 65% were

Islam. About 60% belong to Other Backward Castes, 2.3% Scheduled Caste and the rest 37.7% were General Caste. Most of them about 71% were in the age group 10-13 years (Table 1). Most of them about 60% went up to primary school. About 65% of the adolescent girls were aware about menstrual process and their main source of knowledge is their mothers followed by their sister (Fig2). More than half (52%) of the adolescent girls think that menstrual is a abnormal process which reflect their negative attitude towards it. Very few of them (17%) use sanitary napkin (table 6) and most of them about 78% dispose their adsorbent as usual waste (table 7).

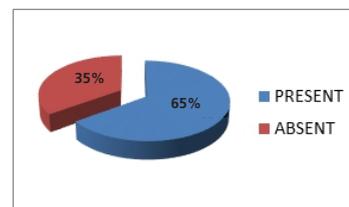
**Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to their age:**

| AGE IN YEARS | NUMBER | %   |
|--------------|--------|-----|
| 10-13        | 142    | 71  |
| 13-16        | 38     | 19  |
| 16-19        | 20     | 10  |
| Total        | 200    | 100 |

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to Educational status:**

| EDUCATIONAL STATUS | NUMBER | %   |
|--------------------|--------|-----|
| ILLITERATE         | 20     | 10  |
| PRIMARY SCHOOL     | 120    | 60  |
| MIDDLE SCHOOL      | 40     | 20  |
| HIGH SCHOOL        | 15     | 7.5 |
| HIGHER SECONDARY   | 5      | 2.5 |
| Total              | 200    | 100 |

**Fig 1: Pie diagram showing the distribution regarding awareness about Menstruation**



**Fig 2: Showing the source of knowledge about menstruation.**

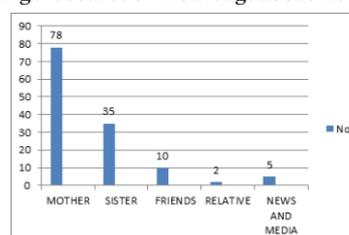


Table 3: Distribution of adolescent girls according to age of menarche:

| AGE OF MENARCHE | NUMBER | %     |
|-----------------|--------|-------|
| 10-13           | 115    | 82.14 |
| 13-16           | 15     | 10.71 |
| 16-19           | 10     | 7.14  |
| Total           | 140    | 100   |

Table 4: Showing attitude of adolescent girls towards menstrual process

| RESPONSES        | NUMBER | %     |
|------------------|--------|-------|
| NORMAL PROCESS   | 42     | 32.30 |
| ABNORMAL PROCESS | 68     | 52.3  |
| DON'T KNOW       | 20     | 15.4  |
| Total            | 130    | 100   |

Table 5: Restrictions practiced during menstruation:

| RESTRICTIONS PRACTICED(MULTIPLE RESPONSE) | NUMBER(140) | %    |
|---|-------------|------|
| RELIGIOUS OCCASIONS                       | 105         | 75   |
| PLAYING                                   | 65          | 46.5 |
| ATTENDING SCHOOL                          | 50          | 35.7 |
| ROUTINE HOUSEHOLD WORK                    | 20          | 14.2 |

#MULTIPLE RESPONSES

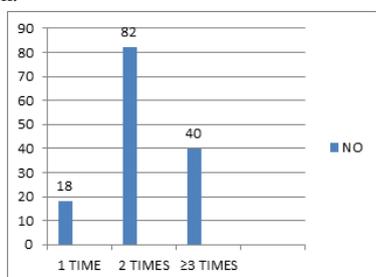
Table 6: Type of absorbent used during menstruation:

| ABSORBANT USED        | NUMBER | %     |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|
| NEW CLOTHES           | 64     | 45.71 |
| OLD CLOTHES(used)     | 46     | 32.85 |
| SANITARY NAPKIN       | 24     | 17.14 |
| BOTH NAPKIN & CLOTHES | 6      | 4.2   |
| TOTAL                 | 140    | 100   |

Table 7: Method of disposal of absorbent.

| Method of disposal | NUMBER | %(N=140) |
|--------------------|--------|----------|
| REGULAR DUSTBIN    | 110    | 78.57    |
| BURNED             | 5      | 3.57     |
| BURIED             | 10     | 7.14     |
| OTHERS             | 15     | 10.71    |
| TOTAL              | 140    | 100      |

FIG 3: Showing frequency of daily change of adsorbent during menstruation.



**DISCUSSION:**

The mean age at menarche in present study was 12.3 years, which was lesser than that observed in the Chennai<sup>3</sup> and Delhi<sup>4</sup> surveys (13.6 years and 13.5 years respectively). It could be because of nutritional status and racial profiles of the girls in our study population. Several other studies like Talwar<sup>5</sup>, Singh<sup>6</sup> and Ranjana<sup>7</sup> also mentioned about various restrictions from doing religious duties, playing, cooking, attending school, etc similarly we also found similar restriction. Most of the adolescent girls are aware about menstruation and like other studies we also found that mother was the main source of information regarding menstrual process. The use of sanitary pads among adolescent of slums is less than other adolescent girls, in our study only 17% adolescent were using sanitary napkin whereas Subhas et al reported that 50% of school going adolescent of Nagpur, Maharashtra were using sanitary pads<sup>8</sup>. Disposing of adsorbent like

usual waste is also very common among adolescent girls of slum (78%) which is higher than other studies<sup>8</sup>.

**CONCLUSION:**

Though the basic awareness regarding menstrual process is sufficient but still there were many taboos associated with menstrual process. The use of sanitary napkin is much lower in our study and proper disposal of used adsorbent during menstruation is almost negligible, most of them(78%) are disposing it as regular waste. The frequency of changing adsorbent is poor, only 28% are changing more than 3 times a day. Beside launching many schemes and programme for Menstrual Hygiene and Adolescent Reproductive & Sexual Health(ARSH) there is much to achieve, use of sanitary napkin should be promoted aggressively. Through Behavioural Change Communication the acceptance of napkin and proper disposal of it should be encourage.

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