



PERCEPTION AND PRACTICES REGARDING MENSTRUATION AMONG SCHOOL GOING ADOLESCENT GIRLS OF BLOCK HAZRATBAL, SRINAGAR: A CROSSECTIONAL STUDY.

Community Medicine

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To assess the perception about and practices during about menstruation among school going adolescent girls of Harwan Zone, Block Hazratbal.

Design : It was a Community based Crossectional study .Study area included all the government schools of the area.

Methodology : Interview of the adolescent girls who had attained menarche and who were willing to participate in the study was done based on predesigned close ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was self administered to all the girls. Analyses was done by IBM SPSS Statistics 23. Mean age of menarche was 12.46 with SD 3.068.

Results : Majority of the girls (53.3%) were scared at the time of menarche. Mostly, the source of information about menstruation was mother.(55.5%).73.3% of the girls consider it as a natural process. Restriction of activity was found in 51.1% of respondents with absenteeism from school in 28.9%. Restriction of sour and cold food was found in 20% and 17.8% of the girls respectively. Majority (77.8%) used to discuss about menstruation with their mother.99.1% had the habit of using pads.Regarding cleaning of genitalia, 33.3% used water, 44.4% used both water and soap and 11.1% used water and antiseptic. Health Seeking behaviour among these girls was only 4.4%

Recommendation: Our study emphasizes on increasing awareness about every aspect of menstruation among adolescent girls before menarche . School can serve as a platform wherein girls can be educated and counselled about various issues and their concerns. Inter sectoral coordination with health and ICDS, Anganwadi centres is needed for increasing awareness, coverage of services and health seeking behaviour.

KEYWORDS

Menarche, Awareness, Practices, Perception.

Introduction:

Adolescent term is applied to the lifespan usually between 10- 19 years. There are an estimated 200 million adolescents in India who comprise one-fifth of the total Indian population(21.2%)¹. Adolescence in girls has been recognized as a special period which signifies the transition from girlhood to womanhood.² It is during this period that the child undergoes rapid changes physically, Psychology and socially. Menstruation among adolescent girls is a topic of concern ,especially in India where it is usually considered as unclean along with many myths and misconception. Common concerns and problems related to menstruation are irregular periods ,disorders such as amenorrhea, excessive uterine bleeding, dysmenorrhoea (pain with bleeding) , and pre-menstrual syndrome.³ It has reported that as many as 40-45 per cent of the adolescent girls have menstruation related problems. These are mainly due to psycho-social stress and emotional changes.¹

Objective:

To assess the perception and practices regarding menstruation among school going adolescent girls of Harwan Zone, Block Hazratbal.

Methodology: A Community based Crossectional study was conducted for a period of three months from July to December 2016.Study area included all the government schools of Harwan zone, Block Hazratbal, Srinagar. Prior permission was taken from the head of the school and was informed about the purpose of the study. It was a convenience sampling as primary data was collected during the visit for school health Programme. Interview of the adolescent girls who had attained menarche and who were willing to participate in the study was done based on predesigned semi structured close ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was self administered to all the girls. Overall, analyses of 45 respondent (adolescent girls) was done after excluding the incomplete format .Data was entered in Microsoft excel and analyses done by IBM SPSS Statistics 23.

Results and Discussion : Overall ,117(54.9%) males and 96 females(45.1%) were subjected to general health check up. Mean age of menarche was 12.46 with SD 3.068. No of adolescent girls included in final analyses was

(n=45).Majority of them (57.8%) were in 9th standard. The Tables depicts perception about menstruation and practices during menstrual

cycle among the respondents.

Majority (53.3%) were scared at the time of menarche. Mostly, the source of information about menstruation was mother.(55.5%). Study by **Anna Maria, Van Ejik, M Sivakami et al** revealed that regarding awareness prior to menarche, mothers were the most frequent source of information.⁴ In the present study,73.3% of the girls consider it as a natural process. A study conducted among adolescent school girls in Pondicherry by **Dr Abhijit Boratne , Shib shekhar datta et al** found that about one-third (34.5%) and 42.05% respondents respectively considered menstruation as a problem and impure state.¹ Our finding identified restriction of activity in 51.1% of respondents with absenteeism from school in 28.9% .Also myths and misconception were related to menstruation. Restriction of sour and cold food was found in 20% and 17.8% of the girls respectively. Combined restriction of food and activity due to shyness/ hesitation and lack of information was found in 22.% and 17.8% respectively.73.64% students practised different restrictions during mensuration in a study conducted by **Subhash B.Thakre, Sushma S Thakre et al.**⁵ Majority (77.8%) used to discuss about menstruation and other issues related to it with their mother.99.1% had the habit of using pads and 51.1% used to change the pads twice in a day most of the time. Regarding cleaning of genitalia, 33.3% used water, 44.4% used both water and soap and 11.1% used water and antiseptic. **Shanbhag D, Shilpa R et al** in their study found that only 44.1% used sanitary pad during the menstrual cycles. Among those who used cloth, only 31.3% used soap and water to clean them¹. It is pertinent to mention here that Health Seeking behaviour among these girls was only 4.4% and very few had knowledge about Adolescent Friendly Health Clinic(AFHC).

Conclusion and recommendation: The study revealed myths and misconception about menstruation. Most of them got scared at their first experience. Restriction of food and activity with absenteeism from school was observed. usage of pads and cleanliness is a common practice among them. Health seeking behaviour was found to be very low. Our study emphasizes on increasing awareness about every aspect of menstruation among adolescent girls before menarche .Make them aware about AFHC and counselling on sensitive issues to increase health seeking behaviour among them is recommended. School can serve as a platform wherein girls can be educated about various issues and their concerns can be addressed by inter sectoral coordination with heath sector and Anganwadi centre.

Table :Perception and practices during menstruation

Particulars	Number	Percentage
Reaction to menarche		
Scared	24	53.3
Indifferent	11	24.4
Discomfort	5	11.1
Disgust	1	2.2
Guilt	4	8.9
Source of information about menstruation		
Mother	22	55.5
Friends	10	2.2
Media	12	20
Others	14	22.2
Perception about menstruation		
Natural	33	73.3
Dirty	12	26.7
Restriction of Activity		
Yes	23	51.1
No	22	48.9
Restriction of type of activity (n=23)		
Absenteeism	13	28.9
Exercise	8	17.8
Bathing	2	4.4
Restriction of food(n=26)		
Hot	7	15.6
cold	8	17.8
sour	9	20
others	2	4.4
Restriction of food and activity (n=26)		
Lack of information	8	17.8
Shyness/Hesitation	10	22.2
others	8	17.8

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Particulars	Number	Percentage
Discuss about menstruation problems		
Yes	35	77.8
No	10	22.2
Using medication during menstruation		
Yes	9	20
No	36	80
Health seeking behaviour		
Yes	2	4.4
No	43	95.6
Taking any supplements		
Yes (occasional)	6	13.3
No	39	86.7
Usage of material		
Cloth	4	8.9
Pads	41	91.1
Frequency of changing pads		
Two times in a day	23	51.1
Three times in a day	22	48.9
Cleaning of external genitalia		
Only water	15	33.3
Soap and water	20	44.4
Water and antiseptic	5	11.1

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