



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Community Medicine

HEALTH PROFILE AMONG SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN OF HARWAN ZONE, BLOCK HAZRATBAL, DISTRICT SRINAGAR.

KEY WORDS: Adolescent, Menstruation, school, Perception

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to collect anthropometric data, to assess the overall health status, to know the perception and practices regarding menstruation and stress and coping behaviour among school going children. It was a community based cross sectional study conducted at all the Government schools of Harwan zone of block Hazratbal, Srinagar from July to October 2016. Pre- designed semi structured proforma with combination of open and close ended questionnaire was used. A total of 213 students were screened for different diseases. Males constitute 54.9% (117) and females 45.1% (96). Mean age was 12.4 with SD 3.068. About 28.2% of the students were anaemic, 19.4% had respiratory infection, 11.3% had skin diseases and other condition like gastrointestinal and refractive error accounted for 21.1% cases. Dental caries was seen in 25.8% of cases. Regarding hygiene, majority scored 1 (Fair hygiene 74.2%) followed by 0 (poor hygiene 30.5%). Mean age of menarche was 12.46 with SD 3.068. Majority (53.3%) were scared at the time of menarche. Restriction of activity was seen in 51.1% of respondents with absenteeism from school in 28.9%. Majority of the students try to find the best solution to overcome a problem (22%). Most of them play games (22%) or listen to music (18%) to distract from their problem. For support, most of them seek help from a friend or family member. 15% of the respondent get into fight with someone.

Introduction:

Biologically, childhood is the span of life from birth to adolescence. Children constitutes 37% of total population in the country.¹ It has been found in studies that every third child has some sign of ill health manifesting in the form of dental problems, skin infections, respiratory problems and gastrointestinal infections.

Children form a vulnerable section of the society. Poor health condition may result in school absenteeism and poor scholastic performance. School play an essential role in overall physical, social, mental and emotional development of children. With this background in mind, we conducted the study to assess the health condition of school going children in Government schools of Harwan, Srinagar.

Objective:

- 1) To record the anthropometric data.
- 2) To do the general physical and systemic examination
- 3) To study the perception and practices regarding menstruation and reproductive health problems among adolescent children.
- 4) To find out the stress coping behaviour among adolescent boys and girls.

Material and Method: It was a community based cross sectional study conducted at all the Government schools of Harwan zone of block Hazratbal, Srinagar from July to October 2016. Prior permission was obtained from head of school after explaining the purpose of the study. Convenience sampling technique was adopted for data collection during school visit for school health programme. Pre- designed semi structured proforma with combination of open and close ended questionnaire was framed. General physical examination, systemic examination and interview among willing adolescent girls and boys participants was done. All the students with different morbidities were referred to UPHC Harwan for treatment and further investigation.

For Anthropometry, standardized equipment was used. Body weight was measured (to the nearest 0.5 kg) on weighing scale machine. Height was measured by Stadiometer (to the nearest 0.5 cm) with the subject standing bare feet in an erect position. For assessing the stress and coping style, T.M Achenbach and youth self report scale² was used. Snellen's chart was used to test visual acuity. For Hygiene, scoring of 0 was given for poor hygiene, 1 for fair and 2 for good hygiene. The data analysis was done with IBM SPSS statistics 23 and results expressed in percentage.

Results and Discussion : A total of 213 students were screened

for different diseases. Males constitute 54.9% (117) and females 45.1% (96). Out of these 45 adolescent girls were interviewed regarding menstruation and reproductive health problems. Mean age was 12.4 with SD 3.068. Mean height and weight was 150.8 cm and 36 kg respectively. About 28.2% of the students were anaemic, 19.4% had respiratory infection, 11.3% had skin diseases and other condition like gastrointestinal and refractive error accounted for 21.1% cases. Dental caries was seen in 25.8% of cases. For Hygiene, scoring of 0 was given for poor hygiene, 1 for fair and 2 for good hygiene. Majority scored 1 (Fair hygiene 74.2%) followed by 0 (poor hygiene 30.5%). Snellens chart was used to test visual acuity. Following morbidity conditions were observed in study by Devidas Tondare et al³ in Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh, URI 91 (23.16%), pediculosis 97 (24.68%), scabies 63 (16.03%), worms in stool 62 (15.78%), refractive errors 49 (12.47%), ear 17 (4.33%), dental carries 79 (20.10%), vitamin A deficiency 42 (10.69%), vitamin B deficiency 101 (25.7%) and anaemia 177 (45.04%).

In another study by Syed Abid et al⁴ in Lucknow, Dental caries was the most common infirmity observed in 63 (37.05%) children with 95% CI (33.35- 40.75) and was statistically significant (p<0.05) with boys 29.27% and girls 44.31%. Anaemia were found in 65 (38.23%) boys and 43.18% girls. Ear discharge was seen in 17 (10%) children, boys were 6.10% and girls 13.63%.

Mean age of menarche was 12.46 with SD 3.068. Majority (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. Study by Anna Maria et al⁵ revealed that regarding awareness, mothers were the most frequent source of information. 73.64% students practised different restrictions during menstruation in a study conducted by Sub hash B. Thakre et al.⁶ 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. 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. Shan bhag D et al⁷ 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 them.

57.8% had discharge and 6% had discharge with offensive smell. LBA (Low backache) was a problem in 57.8% of adolescent girls.

Health Seeking behaviour among these girls was only 4.4% .

Regarding the stress component, majority of the students try to find the best solution to overcome a problem (22%). Most of them use to play games (22 %)or listen to music(18%) to distract from their problem. 22% do something to solve the problem .For support most of them seek help from a friend or family member. 15 % of the respondent get into fight with someone. Brittnay V Hearon et al study findings reveal that students tend to respond to higher stress by reliance on substance use, reduce effort on schoolwork, and deterioration. A cross sectional study was done by Shubhi Tomar et al⁸ in Karnataka. In both the schools majority of students talk to their parents, watch television, playing out with friends to cope up with these situations. coping styles employed by high school students is in such an order as: problem solving, asking for help, fantasy, rationalization, retreat and self-blame .

Conclusion: About 28.2% of the students were anaemic, 19.4% had respiratory infection, 11.3% had skin diseases and other condition like gastrointestinal and refractive error accounted for 21.1% cases. Dental caries was seen in 25.8% of cases. The study revealed myths and misconception about menstruation. 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. The students try to find the best possible solution to overcome stress in their day to day life

Recommendation: Emphasis should be given on de worming, intake of iron rich diet and iron supplements. Personal hygiene needs to be maintained. Timely intervention for all the conditions and health education should be given from time to time. Awareness about every aspect of menstruation, 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 intersectoral coordination with health sector and Anganwadi centre. Focus should be on exploring the stressor at the very outset. A friendly and supportive environment at home and school , teaching about stress coping skills at school may help in the long run. Those with cognitive avoidant behaviour may be provided counselling or assurance.

Conflict of Interest : None

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Authors Contribution: Data acquisition and compilation was done by Dr Mehbooba. Myself conceived the study, framed the questionnaire, Analysed the data and drafted the manuscript.

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