

A STUDY ON PERCEPTION ON THE HEALTH AND MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS LIVING IN SLUMS IN MYSURU CITY

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Abstract: This article made an attempt to study the adolescent girls between the age group of 13 – 16years. The researcher has followed Descriptive research design. For this study the researcher has selected 4 different slum areas in Mysore city. The article reveals that 60% respondents had experienced fear when they attained their first menarche. 68% respondents were using sanitary pads during their menstruation. 69% respondents opined that they had not received training on personal hygiene on menstruation.

Keywords: Menstrual Hygiene; Adolescent girls; Menstruation; Health care.

Introduction

Menstruation is fundamental phenomenon among adolescent girls. It is essential to emphasize on problem of menstruation and personal hygiene during this period (Kendra, 2012). Adolescence, as defined by the World Health Organization, is the period of life spanning the ages between 10 and 19 year. This period is characterized by major biological changes like physical growth, sexual maturation and psycho-social development which require intense readjustment to the self, family, school, work and social life. During this phase of growth the girls first experience menstruation and related problems which is marked by feelings of anxiety and eagerness to know about this natural phenomenon (Datta, et al, 2013).

Menstruation is a natural physiological Phenomenon occurring among women starting from the age of menarche till she attains menopause. Menstruation and menstrual practice are still clouded by many socio-cultural restrictions. It is noted that many adolescent girls are unaware of the scientific facts and hygienic health practices, which sometimes result into adverse health outcomes.

Hygiene related practices of women during menstruation are of considerable importance, as it has a health impact in terms of increased vulnerability to reproductive tract infection (RTI's). Today, millions of women suffer from and its complications and often the infection is transmitted to the offspring of the pregnant mother. Girls having better knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and safe practices are less likely to be vulnerable to RTI and its consequences in future.

Meaning of Menstrual Hygiene

Menstruation is the vaginal bleeding that occurs in adolescent and women as a result of hormonal changes. It normally happens in Predictable patterns, once a month. Menstruation is part of the menstrual cycle, which helps a women's body prepare for the possibility of pregnancy each month. The parts of the body involved in the menstrual cycle include the uterus and cervix, the ovaries, the fallopian tubes, the brain and pituitary gland and the vagina. Certain body chemicals known as hormones rise and fall during the month, causing the menstrual cycle to occur.

In the first half of the menstrual cycle, estrogen level rise, causing the lining of the uterus to grow and thicken. This lining is called the endometrial. The two small, grape-shaped organs inside the abdomen on either side of the uterus, known as the ovaries, are filled with hundreds of thousands of eggs and are the organs that allow pregnancy to occur.

PROBLEM ASSOCIATED WITH MENTRUATION

Dysmenorrheal is the Medical term for menstrual cramps, the dull or throbbing pain in the lower abdomen that many women experience just before and during their menstrual periods. It can be primary or secondary. Primary dysmenorrheal involves no abnormality. Secondary dysmenorrhea involves an underlying physical cause, such as uterine fibroids, pelvic inflammatory disease, or endometriosis. Signs and symptoms of dysmenorrhea, whether it is primary or secondary, may include the following

- Dull, throbbing pain in the lower abdomen
- Radiating pain to the lower back abdomen
- Nausea, loose stool, Sweating and dizziness (though these are much less common)

NATURE OF MENSTRUATION

The menstrual cycle takes place each month in response to the hormonal changes which occur when pregnancy does not take place. A number of symptoms can occur just before and during a girl's period which may cause discomfort. This includes:

- Having pelvic area cramps
- Feeling bloated or puffy
- Breast tenderness or swelling
- Headaches and backaches
- Acne breakouts
- Mild nausea

These symptoms usually stop or lessen a day or two after the period begins.

These are several reasons why a girl should see her healthcare provider regarding her menstrual cycle. These include

- If menstruation has not started by the age of 16.
- If a menstrual period lasts for more than seven days
- If periods suddenly stop
- If she is experiencing excessive bleeding.
- If she feels suddenly ill while using tampons
- If she bleeds more than a few drops between periods
- If she experience excessive pain during her period.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

Though menstruation is no longer the taboo subject it once was, many parents still find that discussing the issue with their daughters can be uncomfortable. This is especially common in families in which the mother is not present. Still, it is important to discuss menstruation with girls when they are preteens, so that they do not experience the potential embarrassment or trauma if they start their first period without knowledge about what is happening to their bodies. Taking the time to prepare may help to make this discussion less awkward.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of related literature, a significant and primary component of any research investigation enables the investigator to understand the earlier research interests, research pattern and magnitude of the research output in a field of knowledge. Following are the selected reviews of articles from the above sources. Researcher reviewed 15 articles on Menstrual Hygiene Management.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Aim of the Study

The aim is to study the perception on the health and Menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls living in slums in Mysuru city.

Objectives

1. To know the socio-demographic details of the respondents.
2. To identify the existing knowledge on health and hygiene among adolescent girls
3. To know the extent of awareness on menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls
4. To suggest measures to improve the level of knowledge on menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls from social work point of view.

Research Design

In the present study the researcher has adopted the descriptive research design to describe the knowledge and awareness on health and menstrual hygiene adolescent girls living in slums in Mysuru city.

Universe of the Study

The following table shows the number of respondents covered for the study in the slums.

Sl. No.	Recognized Blocks by Mysore City Corporation (MCC)	Total Number of Families	Sampling
1	Medras Blocks	464	46
2	Bamboo Bazaar	127	12
3	Vanivilas Mohalla	192	19
4	Janata Colony	215	21
Total		998	100

Source of Data Collection

The research had contacted slum board, situated in Mysore city to gather the information on the statistics on recognized and unrecognized slum in Mysuru. After obtaining the information the researcher has chosen four recognized slums and ten percent of the total number of families were taken and gathered the primary sources of data from families who were having adolescent girls on health and menstrual hygiene. The secondary source of data was collected from books, journals, internet etc.

Tools of Data Collection

The researcher has developed the interview schedule in English and for the purpose of the study it was translated into kannada for the convenience of the respondents. Individual interviews were done for the respondents in their homes after obtaining consent from their parents of adolescent girls.

Data Processing

In order to process the data a code book was prepared entered the code and made the code sheet with the help of code book. The data were tabulated and presented in the form of tablets and graphs.

MAJOR FINDING

- Nearly 56 % respondents were under the age group of 13 -16 years.
- As many as 44 respondents were studying in high school.
- A majority of 46% respondents were living in Madras block.
- As many as 75 respondents were hailed from nuclear families.
- A majority of 96% respondent's father and 88% respondent's mother were coolies.
- As many as 38% respondent's father was earning 3001-5000 rupees per month and 39% respondent's mother was earning rupees 1001 - 3000 rupees per month.
- Nearly 53% respondent's Father and 63% respondent's mother never had been to school.
- As many as 78% respondents brush their teeth once a day.
- A majority of 80% respondents take ablution every day.
- A majority of 96% respondents opined that they wash their hands before eating.
- A majority of 86% respondents opined that they wash their hands with soap after using latrine.
- A majority of 80% respondents opined that they cut their hand's and feet's nail regularly.
- A majority of 80% respondents take bath daily during menstruation.
- A majority of 97% respondents had not visited temple during menstruation.
- As many as 79% respondents were not having any restriction on food habits during their menstruation.
- As many as 60% respondents had experienced fear when they attained their first menarche.
- As many as 65% respondents had a regular pattern of menstruation.
- Nearly 55% respondents had painless menstruation.
- As many as 63% respondents had a minimum of 3-5 days of blood flow.
- Nearly 68% respondents were using sanitary pads during their menstruation.
- Nearly 48% respondents opined that their friends were the source of knowledge regarding menstruation.
- As many as 61% respondents opined that they dispose the used sanitary pads in the dustbins.
- As many as 69% respondents opined that they had not received training on personal hygiene on menstruation.
- Nearly 55% respondents opined that they do not need knowledge on menstruation.

SUGGESTION:

- While working with adolescent girls, social worker professional NGOs and Department of women and child development could disseminate knowledge on the following.
- To create awareness on health and menstruation Hygiene.
- According to the study majority of the respondents had received information on menstruation from their friends, in which they did not have complete and accurate information on menstruation, hence complete information can be given by the social workers and NGOs.
- Regarding the disposal of sanitary napkins, it is reported that majority of the respondents dispose in the dustbin which is positive sign that can be encouraged.
- Better understanding, appropriate knowledge on the menstruation had to be propagated to the adolescent girls living in slums.
- Disseminating the sex education to the adolescent girls.
- Education can be imparted on menstrual hygiene to the mothers of pre-adolescent girls to have awareness on health and menstrual hygiene practices.
- Encouraging the adolescent girls to practice regular physical exercise, yoga and meditation could be helpful in maintain good health.
- To educate on frequent change of sanitary napkins, regular ablution, washing hands with soap, water and maintenance of cleanliness are the good hygienic practices to be followed during menstruation to prevent infection.

CONCLUSION:

Menstruation is a normal physiological process, but is still regarded as something unclean or dirty in Indian society. The reaction to menstruation depends upon awareness and knowledge about the subject. The manner in which a girl learns about menstruation and its associated changes may have an impact on her response to the event of menarche. Although menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several misconceptions, ignorance hence there exist unhygienic practices, false belief are still prevalent regarding menstruation among adolescent girls in the slums. This can be overcome by providing awareness and

accurate knowledge on the practices of menstrual hygiene by the professional social worker, Women and Child Development department and health workers representing Non- Governmental organization working in that area. This will enable girl cater to the right kind of information and the same will be passed on to their predecessors that will bring positive attitude towards practicing hygienic menstruation among adolescent girls in slums.

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