

A STUDY ON MENSTRUAL SYMPTOMS AND RELATED PERSONAL HYGIENE PRACTICES AMONG WOMEN

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Abstract: Menstruation is the normal vaginal bleeding that occurs as part of a woman's monthly cycle. Due to the hormonal changes and ovarian changes PMS symptoms, ovulation, period pain and other symptoms occur. Menstrual hygiene is an issue that is insufficiently acknowledged.

Objectives: This study focuses on the menstrual symptoms of women, factors that affect menstruation and their practices during menstruation.

Methods: A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among 250 women of urban slum area of Lucknow.

Results: Out of 250 respondents, Most of the women of slums 48% complained lower back pain, 42.8% women of slums complained lower abdominal pain. Most of the respondents 66.4 were using cloth at the time of menstruation. 82.8% women of slum used to take daily bath during menstruation.

Conclusions: Most of the women use cloth during their menstruation except sanitary pads at the time of their periods. Most of the women taking regular bath but ignore some works such as worship God, not having pickles and live separately.

Keywords: Menstruation, Early married women of slum.

Introduction

Menstruation is a physiological process, which is associated with the ability to reproduce. The name "menstruation" comes from the Latin "menses" meaning moon, with reference to the lunar month and lasting also approximately 28 days long. Its onset profoundly changes a young woman's life. Menstruation has always been surrounded by different perceptions throughout the world. Nowadays, there is some openness toward menstruation, but differences in attitude still persist between different populations (Cronje HS & Kritzing IE, 1991) Menarche is a milestone in a woman's life as it denotes the start of reproductive capacity. Unfortunately, however, there is gross lack of information on menstrual preparedness and management among adolescent girls, a situation made worse by the shyness and embarrassment with which discussions about menstruation is treated. (Ray Sudeshna & Dasgupta Aparajita, 2012) It is a right of women and girls to have necessary knowledge, facilities and environment for managing menstruation hygienically with their dignity. In Indian context, there are scarce data on menstrual practices among adolescent girls due to population diversity and cultural practices. It was therefore considered as relevant to investigate the menstruation hygiene practices and utilization of health care services by adolescent girls specially residing in slum area. The data obtained are beneficial for planning a program for improving the awareness and hygienic practices during menstruation for promoting quality of life in slum women and girls populations.

Menstruation is surrounded by various psychological and religious barriers due to lack of knowledge about the scientific process of menstruation. Many girls residing in slum areas are unaware of what actually happens during menstrual cycle. Although menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several perceptions and practices within the community, which sometimes may result in adverse health outcomes. (Yasmin S. et al, 2013) Hygiene during menstruation is an inevitable part of woman's life. Various aspects such as physiology, pathology and psychology of menstruation have been found to associate with health and well-being of women; hence, it is an important issue concerning morbidity and mortality of female

population. (Bachloo T. et al, 2016) During this period a woman is regarded most vulnerable for developing any kind of reproductive tract infections, urinary tract infections, and various sexually transmitted diseases. Menstrual hygiene deals with special healthcare needs and requirements of women during monthly menstruation or menstrual cycle. (Barathalakshmi J et al, 2014) Particularly in poor countries, girls and women face substantial barriers to achieving adequate menstrual management. (Kuhlmann A S et al, 2017) Therefore, increased knowledge about menstruation right from childhood may escalate safe practices and may help in mitigating the suffering of millions of women. (Yasmin S et al, 2013)

Objectives

1. To identify the issues and challenges of menstruation encountered by the early married women living in slums of Lucknow.
2. To identify the menstrual symptoms of women living in slum and factors that affect menstruation.
3. To determine the existing practices of menstrual hygiene among women living in slum.

Methodology

A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted in the slum of Lucknow city. Participants belonging to the age group of 15-30 years who were early married were selected for the study. Purposive sampling was applied for selecting the subjects in the desired age group. A total of 250 sample size was selected for this study in the Lucknow Region.

Inclusive Criteria: Selected individuals belonging to the age group of 15-30 years.

Exclusive criteria: Women belonging to schedule tribes were excluded from participating in the study.

A structured questionnaire was developed based on the literature review on various studies already conducted to assess the Symptoms of menstruation and related personal hygiene practices of early married women of slum (Rajanbir Kaur et al (2018), Tanvi Nitin Deshpande et al (2018)). A predesigned and pretested questionnaire was applied for data collection. After pretesting, necessary modifications were made in the questionnaire. The data were collected by house to house visit of the study subjects. Each study subject was briefed about the purpose of the study. The participants were assured of confidentiality and a verbal consent was sought from each of them before initiating the interview. This was followed by collection of data by interviewing study subjects regarding different socio demographic variables, awareness about menstruation, source of information regarding menstruation, practices followed related to menstrual hygiene.

Data analysis: The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS (version 20). The results were expressed mostly in frequencies and percentages.

Result and discussion

Table 1: Socio economic status of the respondents

Characteristics	Details	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-20	70	28
	21-25	119	47.6
	26-30	61	24.4
Religion	Hindu	209	83.6
	Muslim	41	16.4
Caste	General	50	20
	OBC	128	51.2
	SC	72	28.8
Education	Illiterate	142	56.8
	Primary	90	36
	Middle	6	2.4
	High school	4	1.6

	Intermediate	6	2.4
	Graduate/PG	2	.8
Marital Status	Married	222	88.8
	Divorced	15	6.0
	Widow	9	3.6
	Separate	2	.8
	Gauna not performed	2	.8
Employment	Working	150	60
	House wife	100	40
Monthly income	0-5000	97	38.8
	5001-10000	100	60
	10001-15000	53	21.2
Type of Family	Joint	30	12
	Nuclear	220	56.8
	Extended	78	31.2

Table 1 depicts that 47.6 % women were belonging to 21-25 years group followed by 28 %. Only 24.4 % respondents were belonging to 26-30 age group. 83.6 % respondents were Hindu and 16.4 % respondents were Muslim. Most of the respondents 51.2 % were OBC followed by 28.8 % were SC and only 20% women were General. Most of the women were illiterate 56.8% followed by 36% respondents got primary education. 2.4% respondents were middle, 2.4% respondents were intermediate, 1.6% respondents were high school and only .8 % respondents were Graduate or Post graduate. Most of the respondents were married and living with their husband. 6% respondents were divorced 3.6% respondents were widow, Very few respondents .8 % were separate and .8 % respondents' gauna was not performed. 60 % respondents were working and occupied in such profession as home maid, selling vegetables, cooking food etc and rest of the respondents 40 % were house wife. Mostly respondents 60% were belonging to 5001-10000 rupees monthly income group followed by 38.8 % respondent were belonging to 0-5000 rupees monthly income group and only 21.2 % respondents were belonging to 10001-15000 rupees monthly income group. Most of the respondents were belonging to the nuclear family followed by extended family 31.2 and only 12 % respondents were belonging to joint family.

Table 2 availability of home amenities

Characteristics	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Radio	100	40	150	60
DVD	21	8.4	229	91.6
TV	176	70.4	74	29.6
Tape recorder	27	10.8	223	89.2
Mobile	203	81.2	47	18.8
Freeze	67	26.8	183	73.2
Cooler	81	32.4	167	66.8
Fan	140	56	110	44
Washing Machine	7	2.8	243	97.2
Heater	219	87.6	31	12.4
Grinder	11	4.4	239	95.6

It is noticed in table 2 that mostly respondents had low cost home amenities at their home. 87.6 % respondents had heater, 81.2% respondents had mobile, 70.4 % respondents had TV, 56 % had fan, 40 % had radio, 32.4 % had cooler, 26.8 % respondents had freeze, 10.8 % had tape recorder, 8.4% had DVD, 4.4 had grinder and only 2.8 % respondents had washing machine.

Table 3 Other home amenities

Characteristics	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Electricity	201	80.4	49	19.6
Latrine	190	76	60	24
Drinking water	130	52	120	48
Public tap	116	46.4	134	53.6
Cycle	231	92.4	19	7.6
Scooter	33	13.2	217	86.8

It is reported in table 3 the most of the respondents 92.4 % had cycle, followed by 80.4 % had electricity, 76% respondents use latrine, 52 % respondents had drinking water, 46.4% had public tap and only 33% had scooter at their home.

Table: 4 Type of absorbent utilized during the menstruation period

Details	Frequency	Percentage
Use of cloth	166	66.4
Use of cotton	48	19.2
Use of Sanitary pads	36	14.4

Table 4 depicts that most of the respondents 66.4 were using cloth at the time of menstruation due to low income followed by 19.2 % women use cotton and only 14.4 % women use sanitary pads during menstruation period.

Table 5 Consequences of menstruation

Details	Never		Seldom		Always	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lower abdominal pain	46	18.4	97	38.8	107	42.8
Lower back pain	43	17.2	87	34.8	120	48
Vaginal discharge	91	36.4	101	40.4	58	23.2
Vomiting	95	38	104	41.6	51	20.4

Table 5 shows that most of the women of slums 48% complained lower back pain during their menstruation period, 42.8% women of slums complained lower abdominal pain followed by 23.2% complained vaginal discharge and only 20.4% women complained vomiting during their every menstruation. 41.6 % women complained vomiting, 40.4 % women complained vaginal discharge, followed by 38.8 % respondents complained lower abdominal pain and 34.8 % complained lower abdominal pain during their some menstruation period and sometimes not.

Table 6: Factors affecting Women's menstrual cycle

Details	Never		Seldom		Always	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Stress	82	32.8	66	26.4	102	40.8
Extreme emotion (Good/ Bad)	119	47.6	69	27.6	62	24.8
Weight change	121	48.4	80	32	49	19.6
Excessive physical activity	122	48.8	70	28	58	23.2
Travelling	121	48.4	80	32	49	19.6

Table 6 reports that 40.8 % respondents complained that stress affect their menstruation followed by 24.8 % women complained that extreme emotions (good/bad) affect their menstruation, 23.2 % women complained that excessive physical activity affect their menstruation, 19.6% complained that travelling affect their menstruation and 19.6% complained that extreme emotions (good/bad) affect their menstruation frequently. 32 % respondents complained that travelling affect their menstruation, 32 % women complained that weight change affect their menstruation, followed by 28 % women complained that excessive physical activity affect their menstruation, 27.6% complained that extreme emotions (good/bad) affect their menstruation and 26.4% complained that stress affect their menstruation some times.

Table 7: Hygiene practices during menstruation

Details	Never		Seldom		Always	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Daily bath	19	7.6	24	9.6	207	82.8
Separate living	31	12.4	14	5.6	205	82
Not have pickles	35	14	17	6.8	198	97.2
Not to worship God	18	7.2	9	3.6	221	89.2

It is noticed in table 7 that 82.8% women of slum used to take daily bath during menstruation, 9.6 % respondents sometimes take bath and sometimes not and 7.6 % women never take bath during their menstruation period. 82% women always live separate from their husband during their menstruation period. 5.6% slum women sometimes live separately from their husband during their menstruation whereas 12.4 % slum women don't live separately from their husband during their menstruation. Most of the women 97.2 % do not have pickles or sour food items during their menstruation, 6.8 % of slum women sometimes don't have pickles or sour items during their menstruation and only 14 % slum women never used to have pickles during their menstruation period. Most of the slum women never worship God during their menstruation period, 3.6 % slum women sometimes not to worship God during their menstruation time whereas 7.2% slum women always worship God even during their menstruation.

Conclusion

The present research paper shows that Most of the women living in slums follow unhygienic practices. Most of the women living in the slums are using cloth or cotton cloth during their menstruation time. Very less respondents use sanitary pads during their menstruation. Mostly women faced lower back pain and lower abdomen pain during their menstruation. Mostly women don't worship God, live separate from their husband and not have pickles during their menstruation. Most of the respondents take daily bath during their menstruation.

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