

A Study to Assess the Knowledge regarding Menstrual Hygiene among Adolescent Girls at Selected School, Puducherry

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Abstract: Introduction: Adolescence is defined as life between 10 and 19 years of age. In females menstruation marks the beginning of adolescence. Menstruation is a physiological phenomenon which is unique to females in teenage. It is healthy, normal and mature process. Menstruation is still regarded as something unclean or dirty in Indian society. Most of the girls in India are at risk of getting genitourinary tract infections due to unhygienic practices during their menstruation and lack of adequate knowledge about menstrual hygiene. So, with view of this response, there is a need to assess the knowledge of adolescent girls with regard to menstrual hygiene which prevents the genitourinary tract infections. Materials and Method: A descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge on menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls at mutharaiyar English higher secondary school, Puducherry. A total of 100 adolescent girls between the ages of 10-19 years were selected by using the convenient sampling technique. Structured knowledge questionnaire consisting of 30 multiple choice questions was developed and utilized for the data collection. Data were organized and analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results: The findings of the study revealed that only 7% of the adolescent girls had adequate knowledge, 61% had moderate knowledge and 32% had inadequate knowledge. And also, significant association was found between the knowledge of the adolescent girls with their demographic variables such as age, education, religion, age at menarche, previous knowledge about menstrual hygiene. Conclusion: Majority of the adolescent girls had inadequate knowledge on menstrual hygiene. Hence, there is a need for improving knowledge on menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls.

Keywords: Knowledge, Adolescent Girls, Menstrual Hygiene

1. Introduction

Adolescence is defined as life between 10 and 19 years of age. In girls, it is a phase of transition from girlhood to womanhood. In females, menstruation marks the beginning of the adolescence, but they are not prepared and there is lack of knowledge about menstruation among adolescent girls. Adolescence is considered as a critical period in human evolution, although it is often not recognized as such by healthcare workers and parents as well as professionals in adult medicine and pediatric disciplines. The onset of phenomenon that signals reproductive maturity and should not be seen as an abnormal condition or disease.

Menstruation is a physiological phenomenon which is unique to females in teenage. The onset of menstruation is one of the most important changes occurring among the girls during the adolescent years. The first menstruation occurs between 11 and 15 years with a mean of 13 years. Menstruation is also properly called menses or more commonly a period of monthly flow. It is healthy, natural and mature process. Although menstruation is natural process, it is linked with several adverse health outcomes.

Menstruation is the first indication of puberty. During puberty, the physical changes occur which transform the body of child into that of an adult, changes in body size and changes in body proportion. Menstrual hygiene depends upon the educational, socio economic and cultural statuses of the family. But many lack economic and social conditions to manage menstrual sanitation satisfactorily. Menstruation is still regarded as something unclean or dirty in Indian society. The reaction to the menstruation depends upon awareness and knowledge about the subject.

Menstrual hygiene management is limited by various cultural, social and economic factors. Infections because of poor menstrual hygiene during menstruation have been reported in many studies. Problems such as lack of water and bathroom facilities, lack of private rooms for changing sanitary pads and ignorance because of lack of education are some of the factors responsible for poor menstrual hygiene, which in turn poses many reproductive health problems in future.

Good menstrual hygiene practices are essential during menstruation which includes: 1) Regular change of clothing and underwear, 2) Change of hygienic pads every three to four hours, 3) Daily showering, especially in instances of dysmenorrhea, 4) Adequate washing of the genitalia after each voiding of urine and feces, 5) Continuing normal routine and daily activities (e.g. Going to school, doing physical exercise) and 6) Maintaining a balanced diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables rich in iron and calcium.

Every year approximately 10% of women worldwide are exposed to genital infections including urinary tract infections and bacterial vaginosis and 75% of women have a history of genital infections. Specifically, the common risk factors for the vaginal infections include pregnancy and poor hygiene (both perineal and menstrual hygiene), due to lack of adequate knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene. It was therefore felt as a need to assess the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene.

Statement of the Problem

A Study to Assess the Knowledge on Menstrual Hygiene among the Adolescent Girls at Selected Schools, Puducherry.

Objectives

- 1) To assess the knowledge of adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene.
- 2) To associate the relationship between the selected demographic variables and knowledge of the adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene.

2. Review of Literature

The review of literature for the present study was gathered and organized with regard to assessment of knowledge on menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.

3. Material and Method

A descriptive study was used to conduct the study. The study was carried out among the adolescent girls who were studying in Mutharaiyar English higher secondary school, Puducherry. One hundred adolescent girls aged between 10-19 years were selected for the study using convenient sampling technique. A structured questionnaire with section – A and section- B was developed and used for collecting the data from the subjects. Section – A consists of 5 items on demographic variables like age, religion, educational status, age at menarche, previous knowledge of menstrual hygiene. And section- B consisted of 30 knowledge items on menstrual hygiene. The data collection was done by administering the questionnaire to the study subjects. The responses of the adolescent girls were organized and analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics which includes mean, standard deviation and chi-square test.

4. Major Findings

Table 1: Frequency & Percentage distribution of adolescents girls by the selected variables, N=100

S. No.	Sample Characteristics	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1	Age		
	(a) 12 years	5	5%
	(b) 13 years	42	42%
	(c) 14 years	43	43%
	(d) 15years	10	10%
2	Religion		
	(a) Hindu	64	64%
	(b) Christian	31	31%
	(c) Muslim	5	5%
	(d) Others	0	0
3	Educational	5	5%
	(a) VII Standard	95	95%
	(b) VIII Standard	0	0
	(c) IX Standard	0	0
	(d) X Standard		
4	Age at Menarche		
	(a) 12 years	58	58%
	(b) 13 years	25	25%
	(c) 14 years	9	9%
	(d) 15 years	8	8%
5	Previous Knowledge		
	(a) Yes	73	73%
	(b) No	27	27%

The above data in the table 2 and fig. revealed that 32% of adolescent girls had inadequate knowledge, 61% of

adolescent girls had moderate knowledge, and only 7% of adolescent girls had adequate knowledge on menstrual hygiene. The study findings revealed that, out of 100 adolescent girls enrolled in the study,(5%) where at the age group of 12 years(42%) were at the age of 13 years (43%) were at the age of 14 years and 10% were at the age group of 15 years. When it comes to religion, majority of adolescent girls (64%) were Hindus, 31% were Christians, 5% were Muslims. With regard to education 5% were studying VII standard, 95% were VIII standard. In the regard to age at menarche 58% of adolescent girls attained menarche at the age of 12 years, 25% attained menarche at the age of 13 years, 9% attained menarche at the age of 14 years and 8% attained at the age of 15 years. Majority of the adolescent girls (73%) had previous knowledge on menstrual hygiene.

Table 2: Distribution of frequency and percentage of knowledge scores of adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene, n= 100

S. No.	Knowledge Score	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Mean	Sd
1.	Age in years	32	32%	12.55	3.54
2.	Religion	61	61%	12.55	3.54
3.	Education	7	7%	12.55	3.54

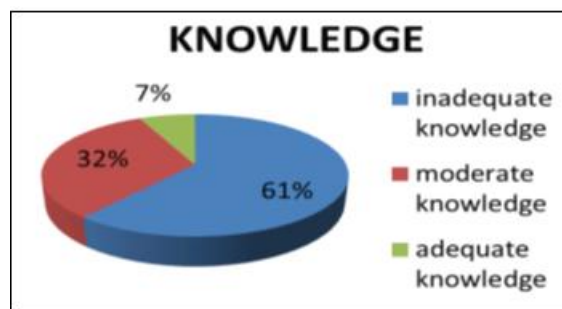


Figure 1: Knowledge level of adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene

The above data in the table 2 and fig. revealed that 32% of adolescent girls had inadequate knowledge, 61% of adolescent girls had moderate knowledge, and only 7% of adolescent girls had adequate knowledge on menstrual hygiene.

Table 3: Chi-Square Values Showing the Association between Knowledge and Selected Variables

S. No.	Demographic Variables	Chi-Square Value (χ^2)	Degree of Freedom (Df)	Table Value
1.	Age in years	7.5	6 NS	12.59
2.	Religion	1.33	6N S	12.59
3.	Education	1.11	6N S	12.59
4.	Age at menarche	20.36	6 S	12.59
5.	Previous knowledge of menstrual hygiene	1.44	2 NS	5.99

N.S =Non significant at 0.05% level
S= significant at 0.05% level

The chi-square values obtained for knowledge scores and age at menarche ($\chi^2=20.36$) was higher than the table value. This indicates that there was a significant relationship between knowledge of adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene and their age at menarche. Hence, the researcher accepted the hypothesis and rejected the null hypotheses.

The chi-square values for knowledge scores and age ($\chi^2=7.52$), religion ($\chi^2= 1.33$), education ($\chi^2=1.11$), and previous knowledge on menstrual hygiene ($\chi^2=1.44$) were less than the table value with significant level at 0.05%. Hence, there was no significant relationship existing between the knowledge scores of adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene with above stated variables.

5. Discussion

This study was carried out to assess the knowledge of adolescent girls on menstrual hygiene. Findings of the study revealed that only 32% of adolescent girls had inadequate knowledge, 61% of adolescent girls had moderate knowledge and 7% of adolescent girls had adequate knowledge. This is supported by a study conducted by Ruchi, Farha Azmi in which it was revealed that 25% of adolescent girls had adequate knowledge, 37.5% had moderate knowledge and 37.5% had inadequate knowledge on menstrual hygiene. In the present study it was found that significant association exists between knowledge of adolescent girls and their socio-demographic variables such as age ($\chi^2=7.52$), religion ($\chi^2= 1.33$), education ($\chi^2=1.11$), age at menarche ($\chi^2=20.36$).¹⁰

6. Conclusion

The study results revealed that majority of the adolescent girls had inadequate knowledge on menstrual hygiene and the knowledge of adolescent girls was significantly associated with their socio-demographic variables which include age, religion, educational status, age at menarche and previous knowledge on menstrual hygiene. Hence, there is a need to educate the adolescent girls about the menstrual hygiene and its importance to enhance their knowledge.

7. Recommendations

- 1) A similar study can be undertaken on one sample with different demographic variables.
- 2) A similar can be conducted using a large sample.
- 3) A comparative study can be conducted among adolescent girls in rural and urban areas.
- 4) A small study can be conducted by structured teaching programme.

Ethical Clearance: Taken from the institutional ethical committee.

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