



STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS OF A SELECTED SCHOOL IN SONEPAT

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ABSTRACT

Aim: A study was conducted in Geetanjali Senior Secondary School, Gohana Road, Sonapat to assess the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.

Methodology: Quantitative Research Approach and Descriptive Research Design was used to conduct the present study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample size of 100 adolescent girls of age 11-16 years. Knowledge of study sample knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene was assessed through self-administered questionnaire. A validated PPT (power point presentation) & video on maintenance of menstrual hygiene were developed and presented to the study samples to educate them about the physiological process involved in menstruation and maintenance of menstrual hygiene.

Results: The research findings depict that the majority (81%) of the adolescents have fair knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene, 11% have poor knowledge and only 8% have good knowledge. The result further depicts that there was a significant association between the knowledge score and age, religion, educational status, way of traveling to school and the term used for menstrual cycle.

Conclusion: Since the study showed that maximum women had inadequate knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls so the health care providers are in key position to

educate the adolescent girls using various public awareness programme to maintain the menstrual hygiene to decrease the morbidity and complications in their reproductive period.

Keywords: Adolescent girls, knowledge, menstrual hygiene.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is considered a critical period in human evolution, although it is often not recognized as such by health care workers and parents as well as professionals in adult medicine and pediatric disciplines¹. The onset of menstruation in adolescence is a phenomenon that signals reproductive maturity and should not be seen as an abnormal condition or disease.

Menstruation is a phenomenon unique to the females. The onset of menstruation is one of the most important changes occurring among the girls during the adolescent years. The first menstruation (menarche) occurs between 11 and 15 years with a mean of 13 years.

Menstruation is a normal physiological process indicating beginning of reproductive life but sometimes it is considered as unclean phenomenon in the Indian society². Insufficient, incorrect information regarding menstruation is often a cause of unnecessary restrictions in the daily normal activities of the menstruating girls creating various psychological issues. Besides, the lack of knowledge and awareness also lead to some poor personal hygienic practices during menstruation leading to many reproductive tract infections².

Adolescent girls constitute a vulnerable group, particularly in India where female child is neglected one. Menstruation 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 and practices, which sometimes result into adverse health outcomes³.

The varied reactions to menarche may depend on the extent to which the girls have been prepared regarding the same. Fear, panic and other negative reactions to menstruation by adolescent girls highlights the fact that girls with no previous knowledge about menstruation felt more scared at menarche⁴. These negative feelings associates with menstruation could be

because of participants not being psychologically prepared for attaining menarche which is an important milestone in their life⁵.

Menstrual hygiene depends upon the educational, socioeconomic, and cultural statuses of family. School curriculum also has some role in menstrual health⁶. Today, the number of women who have regular menstruation periods is increasing in developing countries including India due to later childbearing and fewer children. But many lack the economic and social conditions to manage menstruation sanitation satisfactorily. A particularly vulnerable group in this aspect is young women in poor families. Furthermore, understanding young women's knowledge and practices related to menstruation is a central element for designing appropriate education programs⁷.

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 infections (RTI). The interplay of socio-economic status, menstrual hygiene practices and RTI are noticeable. Today millions of women are sufferers of RTI and its complications and often the infection is transmitted to the offspring of the pregnant mother. Women having better knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and safe practices are less vulnerable to RTI and its consequences. Therefore, increased knowledge about menstruation right from childhood may escalate safe practices and may help in mitigating the suffering of millions of women³.

Poor menstrual hygiene causes great impact in increased vulnerability to reproductive tract infections (RTI). Currently millions of women sufferers from RTI and infection is transmitted to the offspring. Women having knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene are less vulnerable to RTI and its consequences. Therefore, increased knowledge about menstruation from adolescent period help in decreased suffering of millions of women³.

There is very limited social and health related research on menstruation issues in low and middle income countries including India. There is also limited research on menstruation as a social and cultural phenomenon or on the technical and hygienic aspects of sanitary protection in various socio-economic contexts. The reason might be that menarche and menstruation are considered a taboo and thus rarely discussed⁷, even between mother and daughter. The reason for mother's reluctance to discuss menstruation and related issues with their daughters can be partially related to their own lack of knowledge of the physiology of menstruation⁸.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study to assess the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls of a selected school in Sonapat with the following objectives:

- To assess knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.
- To determine the association level of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene with the selected variables.
- To develop and validate the PPT(power point presentation) & video on maintenance of menstrual hygiene.

METHODOLOGY

A descriptive study was conducted to assess the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among 100 adolescent girls between the age of 11-16 years, were willing to participate in research study and who were able to read and write English. The study sample were selected using purposive sampling technique and the study was conducted in Geetanjali Senior Secondary School, Gohana Road, Sonapat. A structured self-administered questionnaire i.e. Menstrual Hygiene questionnaire was used to collect the data related to selected demographic data i.e. age, religion, residence, type of family, education status, dietary pattern, personal habits, age of menarche, source of information about menstruation, duration of menstrual cycle, term used for menstrual cycle, pain during menstrual cycle and knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene consisting of areas i.e. concept, puberty, diet, personal hygiene, menstrual hygiene and myths related to menstruation. A validated PPT (power point presentation) and video on maintenance of menstrual hygiene were developed and presented to the adolescent girls to educate them about the physiological process involved in menstruation and maintenance of menstrual hygiene.

The analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency and percentage distribution was used to analyze the demographic data of the study sample while mean, median, standard deviation and mean percentage was used to describe the knowledge scores of the adolescent girls. The level of association of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene with the selected variables was done using Chi square.

RESULT

The study findings indicated that majority(67%) of adolescents come under age group of 11-13 years and 33% were in 14-16 years age group .Majority (95%) of the adolescents belonged to Hindu religion, 1% belonged to Muslim religion, 0% Christian and 4% belonged to other religion.Majority (79%) of the adolescents lived in rural locality whereas 21% of the couple lived in urban locality. Majority (65%) adolescents lived in joint family, 28% lived in nuclear while 7% lived in extended family. Most (77%) had the educational status till secondary level, 23% had primary level educational status.

Majority (99%) doesn't have any personal habits and 1% is having smoking. Most (88%) were vegetarian and 12% were non vegetarian. Majority (56%) have age of menarche from 13-14 years,27% have from 12-13 years,15% have above 15years and 2% have at 10-12 years. Ninety four percent (94%) of the adolescents travel to school by school transport, 5% by walk whereas 1% travel by their own vehicle. Eighty seven percent (87%) adolescents have knowledge about menstruation by their parents, 8% by their friends, 3% from others while 2% doesn't have knowledge about menstruation.

More than half (52%) adolescent have menstrual cycle for 4-7 days, 38% for 0-3 days, 7% adolescents have above 10 days whereas 3% have for 6-10 days. More than half (58%) of the adolescents used the term periods, dates, menses for menstruation, 21% adolescents used the term periods, 11% used dates and 10% used the term menses for menstruation. 35% adolescents have moderate pain during menstrual cycle, 25% have mild pain, 22% have severe pain whereas 18% adolescents have no pain during menstrual cycle.

TABLE 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Adolescent Girls According to their Knowledge Scores

Level of knowledge score	Range of knowledge score	Frequency (%)
Good	21-30	08
fair	11-20	81
poor	0-10	11

Maximum score: 30; Minimum score: 0

Data in the table 1 indicates that the majority (81%) of the adolescents have fair knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene, 11% have poor knowledge and only 8% have good knowledge.

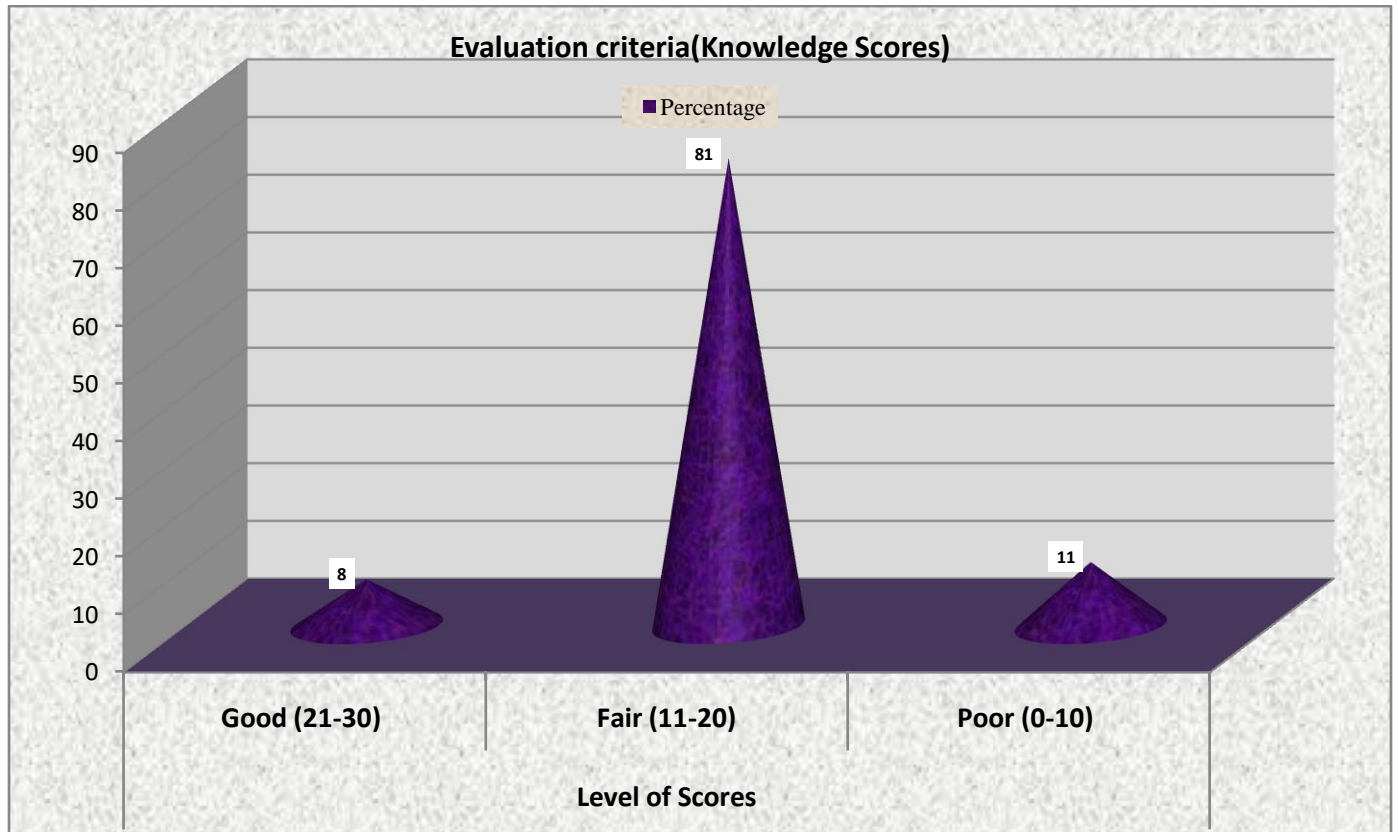


Figure.1 Cone graph showing comparison of knowledge score of adolescent girls

TABLE 2

Mean, Median and Standard Deviation of Knowledge Score of Adolescent Girls

								N=100	
Descriptive Statistics	Mean	Median	S.D.	Maximum	Minimum	Range	Mean %	Possible Gain %	
Knowledge Score	15.43	16	4.20	24	5	19	51.43	48.57	

Maximum score: 30 ; Minimum score: 0

The data presented in Table 2 reveals that the mean knowledge score of the adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene was 15.43, median was 16 and standard deviation was 4.20 with

maximum score of 30 and minimum score of 0.

Chi-square value was computed to find the association of knowledge score of adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene and the various selected demographic variables. The table 2 depicts there was not a significant association between the knowledge score and Residence(5.991),Type of family(9.488),Personal habits(5.991),Dietary pattern(5.991),Age of menarche(12.592),Source of information about menstruation(12.592),Duration of menstrual cycle(12.592),Pain during menstrual cycle(12.592) while there was a significant association between the knowledge score and Age(5.991),Religion(9.448),Educational status(5.991)and the Term used for menstrual cycle (12.592)by the adolescent girls at 0.05 level of significance and therefore these variables had the effect on their knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene.

CONCLUSION

On the basis of findings of the present study, the study illuminates that the knowledge regarding normal physiological process of menstruation and maintenance of menstrual hygiene was quite less among the adolescent girls. Menstrual hygiene is an issue needs to be addressed right from the age of menarche of adolescent girls which is considered as vulnerable group and throughout their life time till they reach their period of menopause.Awareness regarding the need for information on healthy menstrual practices is very important because the amount of knowledge is not good enough.

It is significant to aware and educate adolescent girls for good hygiene practice related to menstruation in the form of formal education in school curriculum as well as informal education through mass media so as to enable them to lead a healthy reproductive life and prevent the risk for various complications such as reproductive as well as urinary tract infections, infertility. So, nursing professionals are in a key position to guide the adolescents via Power Point Presentations, video, workshop, seminars, social awareness program etc. A platform should be prepared by the help of government to bring together individuals, organizations, social businesses and the media to create a united and strong voice for women and girls around the world, helping to break the silence about menstrual hygiene management.

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