



**AWARENESS ABOUT MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS
IN RURAL AREA OF KANCHEEPURAM DISTRICT –TAMIL NADU**

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ABSTRACT

Research Question: How the menstrual hygiene practices among rural adolescent girls were performed? Rural area under rural health training centre of Sree Balaji Medical College and Hospital, Padappai, Kancheepuram District, Tamilnadu. A community based cross sectional study. Participants: 180 adolescent girls Padappai comprises about 4 schools of which 3 private schools and one government school. Permission was obtained from government school and all the students from age group 11 to 16 were taken as study sample. Results: Age ranged from 11 to 16 years for attainment of menarche. Only 43.33% girls were aware regarding menstruation prior to the attainment of menarche. Mother was found to be the first source of information regarding menstruation in 57.69% of girls. 35.55% girls reported use of old cloth for protection during menstruation. 77.77% girls were restricted to attend religious occasions during menstruation.

KEYWORDS: *adolescent girls, menstrual hygiene*



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescent girls constitute about 1/5th total female population in the world. Adolescence in girls has been recognized as a special period in their life cycle that requires specific and special attention. This period is marked with onset of menarche. Menstruation is a phenomenon unique to all females.¹ WHO has defined Adolescence as the period between 10-19 years of life². The first menstruation is often horrifying and traumatic to an adolescent girl because it usually occurs without her knowing about it. This concept was responsible for related taboos³. It is still considered as something unclean or dirty in Indian society⁴. Women having a better knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and safe menstrual practices are less vulnerable to reproductive tract infections and its consequences. Although menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several perceptions and practices, which sometimes result in adverse health outcomes. So the present study was undertaken to study knowledge, status of hygiene and practices regarding menstruation among adolescent girls in rural

area of kancheepuram district, Tamilnadu because study area is under RHTC of Sree balaji medical college.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Rural health training centre at Padappai is a rural field practice area attached to the department of Community Medicine, Sree Balaji Medical College And

Hospital, Kancheepuram District Chennai. The field practice area Padappai comprises about 4 schools of which 3 private schools and one government school. Permission was obtained from government school and all the students from age group 11 to 16 because menstrual hygiene at this age group should be taught to them and the study sample is (n=180). A community based cross-sectional study was carried out from January 2015 to April 2015. After obtaining informed consent, information regarding menstrual hygiene was recorded in predesigned pre-tested proforma.

RESULTS

Out of total 240 adolescent girls, 180(75 %) girls have attained menarche. Maximum number of girls (68.89%) have attained menarche in the age ranged between 12-14 years. 20% girls have reported blood flow for more than 5 days. In 57.77% girls, menstrual cycle was of 28-32 days (Table I). Only 43.33% girls were aware regarding menstruation prior to the attainment of menarche. In 57.69% of girls mother was found to be first source of information regarding menstruation. Teachers, friends and relatives were other sources of information (Table II). 50% girls have reported use of sanitary pads during menstruation. 35.55% girls have reported use of old clothes during menstruation (Table III). 77.77% girls were not allowed to attend religious occasions. 41.13% and 46% girls respectively were restricted from doing routine household work and playing (Table IV).

Table I
Menstrual pattern in adolescent girls

Pattern	Number (%)
Age at which menarche attained	
< 12	17(9.40)
12-14	124(68.89)
>14	39(21.71)
Duration of blood flow in days	
< 2	14(7.77)
3-5	130(72.23)
>5	36(20.00)
Length of cycle in days	
< 28	27(15.00)
28-32	104(57.77)
>32	49(27.23)
Quantity of blood flow	
Normal	140(77.77)
Excessive	24(13.34)
Scanty	16(8.89)

Table II
Awareness regarding menstruation among adolescent girls

Awareness (n=180)	Number (%)
Present	78(43.33)
Absent	102(56.67)
Source of information regarding menstruation(n=78)	
Mother	45(57.69)
Teacher	10(12.82)
Friend	18(23.08)
Relative	5(6.41)

Table III
Practices of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls (n=180)

Type of protection used	Number (%)
Old clothes	64(35.55)
Sanitary pads	90(50)
Both	26(14.45)

Table IV
Restrictions practiced during menstruation among adolescent girls

Restriction practiced for(multiple responses)	Number (%)
Religious occasions	140(77.77)
Playing	46(25.55)
Attending school	59(32.77)
Routine household work	74(41.13)
Food restrictions	14(7.77)

DISCUSSION

In the present study maximum number of girls has attained menarche between 12-14 years. Which is closely similar to study conducted by Keerti Jogdand, Pravin Yerpude⁵ and Narayana et al⁶. 72.23% girls have reported blood flow between 3-5 days. Balasubramanian⁷ reported 84% girls had 3-5 days menstrual blood flow. Only 43.33% adolescent girls were aware about menstruation before attainment of menarche. This may be due to ignorance and low level of literacy among mothers of adolescent girls. Similar findings were reported by some authors.^{4,8} In present study 57.69% girls reported mother as a first source of information. Close relation and better communication between mother and daughter may be the reason for present study finding. Singh et al⁹ and Keerti Jogdand, Pravin Yerpude⁵ found in 64.9% and 61.29% respectively in which girls mother was first source of information similar to the present study. 35.55% girls have reported use of old clothes during menstruation similar to Keerti Jogdand, Pravin Yerpude⁵. Poverty, high cost of sanitary pads and ignorance may be the reasons for present finding. Few authors^{3,8,9} found ignorance among girls regarding use of sanitary pads

during menstruation similar to the present study. A number of studies(3,4,6,9) reported different type of restrictions observed during menstruation similar to present findings.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study revealed that mothers of adolescent girls were ignorant about informing daughters about menstruation prior to menarche. All mothers irrespective of their educational status should be taught to break their inhibitions about discussing with their daughters regarding menstruation before age of menarche. Education regarding reproductive health and hygiene should be included as a part of school curriculum. Better hygienic practices can be adopted by making sanitary pads available at affordable prices (social marketing). Government of India is starting a scheme of making available subsidized sanitary napkins to adolescent girls in the age group of 10-19 years in rural India from August 2011. As part of promotion of menstrual hygiene, the napkins will be sold by the ASHA to girls at a cost of Rs.6 for a pack of six i.e. Rs.1 per piece in the villages

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