



A STUDY ON THE INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ON THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICES IN ADOLESCENTS.

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Abstract

This manuscript reviews the literature concerning the awareness of menstrual hygiene practices among adolescents. Onset of menarche marked as a fearful and shocking phase among adolescents. This fear is generated because of the lack of knowledge among young girls. Many findings show that in their early stages of menarche females were not able to explore from which part of their genital areas they were bleeding. Many of the studies showed that girls were scared and confused when they first saw the blood and many girls complain about the heavy bleeding and unbearable abdominal pains. From the study it is shown that many restrictions were imposed on the girls like not eating specific food during menstruation.

Keywords: *abdominal pains, genital areas, restrictions, menarche, knowledge*



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Background of the Study:

A study done by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in year 2011 states that among 20 percent of the population of India comprises of adolescents in which about half of the population resides in the rural areas¹. Onset of menarche is not a taboo as everybody including males of the society as well knows that this is a beginning of reproductive phase in a women's life but there is a hypocrisy prevailing in our society and that is when a female is bleeding then she is called as dirty, she is treated like an impure stuff and because of that she is debarred from many of the daily chorus which she is doing it on her daily basis. These are all misbeliefs and misconceptions related to the menstruation².

In developing countries like India, the problem is still in their alarming stage because poor menstrual hygiene practices are not taken seriously and it is always considered as an ignorant



topic³. A research done by Khanna A et al.2005 says that with good menstrual hygiene practices chances of reproductive tract infections (RTIs), sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are seen low⁴.

As lack of information on menstrual hygiene practices among adolescents are high this led to a situation of shyness, ignorance, embarrassment which forces them not to speak publicly and openly⁵. For adolescents it is necessary that the use proper sanitary napkins preferably biodegradable sanitary napkins. They should wash their vaginal area at least two times a day in a direction from front to backward direction^{6,7,8}.

Statement of the problem:

A review study on the influential factors in the level of awareness in menstrual hygiene practices in context of adolescents. Lack of information on menstrual hygiene practices among adolescents are high due to which females are often left with ignorance and embarrassment.

Scope of the Study:

The research study entitled “A review study on the influential factors in the level of awareness in menstrual hygiene practices in context of adolescents” is undertaken to know the opinion of the adolescent girls about their awareness on menstrual hygiene practices.

Objectives

1. To review the influential factors in the level of awareness in menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls.

Findings:

Knowledge of menstruation among adolescents. A study done by Dasgupta et al.(2008) on 160 adolescents and according to the study only in 60 of the cases mother was the first educator of imparting knowledge to their daughters on menstruation and hygienic practices and in 46 cases he observes that they collected information from their friends or relatives⁹. Hence, from the study it can be said that if mother can impart knowledge of menstruation and safe hygienic practices to their daughters, then their daughters will develop a good habit of menstrual hygiene. So first it is important for the policy makers that they should teach mothers also regarding safe hygienic practices along with the young girls.

Cultural taboos are often lag females from utilising full resources of menstruation from the community. In the same study done by Dasgupta et al. (2008) on 160 adolescents with the



mean age of 12.8 years further explains that about 10 girls have a mind-set of curse of god to females and 8 girls think that it is a kind of illness in their body and about 4 girls think that it is a kind of sin which is disturbing them every month⁹. Hence, it can be said that there are menstrual educators, policy makers who are working on dissolving the myths spreading in community but lack of resources forces girls to perceive negative things related to menstruation. First, work should be done on removing the misconceptions associated with menstruation.

Academic performances of girls are highly disturbed by menstrual cycle. Females face premenstrual syndrome (PMS) like painful menstrual periods, heavy bleeding, breast tenderness, vomiting, back pain and water retention that compels females to remain absent from school which not only affects their academic and social lives but also their involvement in sports activities^{10,11}.

Lack of control to a toilet infrastructure by a female in a household. In one of the sustainable development goals (SDG) that is SDG 6 the menstrual policy makers are trying to achieve sufficient hygienic and equitable sanitation for all the people and end open defecation by the end of 2030 while putting special emphasis on the needs of the vulnerable section of the society including females¹². Because it is seen that women faced lot of hurdles when it comes to proper toilet facilities.

Role of mass media in removing misconceptions associated with menstruation. Both conventional and non-conventional medium of menstruation has been prove to be a role model. A study done by world bank group shows that the rural women are very tough in accepting the facts they were taught regarding menstrual hygiene practices as compared to urban areas. Educational messages communicated via posters, drama, flip book, story-telling sessions, televisions, radio, group discussions, home visits played a major role in creating awareness on menstruation¹³.

Imposing restrictions on the type of food eaten while menstruating. Among the communities it is a practice that women should not touch and eat sour and cold foods like curds, pickles etc. or those foods which are vulnerable to spoilage. However, there is no scientific fact available that restrict women from the type of eaten or not to be eaten during menstruation. hence, limiting specific foods may put females at a risk of nutrient deficiency¹⁴



Many myths prevail in the society that menstruation affects women's abilities. Menstruation is all about hormones. Some women may face mood swings during or before the onset of menstruation but necessarily doesn't mean that their physical or emotional ability is lesser than males¹⁵.

Period poverty

Many women in low-income countries or in the developing countries have a poor access to menstrual products due to poor finances. These menstrual products are sanitary napkins, tampons, menstrual cups, menstrual sponge, underwear, soap and water. When a female has poor access to menstrual products girls stay at home which affect their education and economic opportunities. Many policy makers and menstrual educators around the world advocates for a taxation exempt for menstrual products¹⁶.

Methods

1. criteria of reviewing: In the present study secondary data was taken. Published Articles, research papers, books, journals were reviewed for the study.
 - a . Inclusion criteria:
 - All the researches done on adolescents menstrual hygiene practices were reviewed.
 - b. Exclusion criteria:
 - All those researches who does not included adolescents menstrual hygiene practices were not reviewed.
2. Sequence followed: The re-evaluation followed this sequence: title, abstract, full text, literature selection, and author citation.
3. Tools used: Secondary data have been gathered from various journals, magazines and websites.

Conclusion:

This study reveals that ignorance, wrong perceptions, unhealthy practices regarding menstruation are the major problems in the society. Role of mother and infact both the parents can be a turning point in a girl's life when it comes to educate their child regarding menstruation. Hence, from the above findings it can be said that there is a requirement of creating awareness of safe and hygienic practices among the adolescent girls that bring them Out Of False Traditional Beliefs, Wrong Misconceptions And Forced Restrictions.

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