

Mensural Hygiene Management Practices Among Adolescent Girls

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ABSTRACT

Menstruation is associated with a variety of beliefs and prohibitions in our country, different cultures have different perceptions regarding menstruation while it's a normal phenomenon for every female which comes every month. But due to such beliefs, a menstrual girl is unclean, untouched, and dirty, resulting in a lack of awareness among adolescent females. Stress-related to menstruation and reproductive tract Infections are caused by insufficient menstrual hygiene habits. In our community, sexually transmitted illness and HIV/AIDS are not openly acknowledged, leaving youth susceptible. Mensural hygiene management refers to the management practices that are done by girls at the time of their menstruation. At that time, numerous organisms are attracted from the body and multiply due to the warmth of the blood, which causes many infections like irritation, rashes, urinary tract infections, etc. There are many menstrual products available on the market to absorb the blood at the time of bleeding through the vagina. But regular use of such products can prevent us from many infections. So, it is important to make all girls and women aware of menstrual hygiene products and practices according to their needs and requirements. Many females are unaware of the sizes and absorbency of napkins and are unable to select their menstrual products based on their needs. And such women faced stains on their clothes. However, once they have a thorough understanding of the products, they will be able to easily understand and meet their needs.

The present study entitled "Menstrual Hygiene management practices among adolescent girls" is aimed at studying the availability of menstrual products, their knowledge, and practices regarding menstrual hygiene. In addition, we find the usage and knowledge of menstrual products. A sample size of 100 adolescent girls who were studying in classes 11th and 12th was taken by AMU senior secondary school (girls) 16-19 years. It was found that Adolescent girls were unaware of many Menstrual products which are good for health as well as for the environment. They lack knowledge about the variety available of menstrual products in the market and their usage. Most of them have good knowledge about Menstrual Hygiene. They change their pads regularly and even change their pads at night and most of them take baths during menstruation. Also, some adolescent girls are aware of the disposal of menstrual products. It is suggested that in schools, there should be a proper way of disposing of Menstrual waste. They have to build incineration for the disposal of menstrual products which cause less harm to the environment.

Keywords: *menstrual hygiene, adolescent girls, menstrual management*

INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization, adolescents are defined as those between the ages of 10 and 19.[1] The key and undoubtedly one of the most difficult times for a girl is when nature brings about a variety of changes that produce emotional and psychological instability all at once, which gradually leads to womanhood (Fernandes, 2010). Menstruation is the term for the regular shedding of the uterine lining during a woman's monthly menstrual cycles in reproductive-aged females (Aniebue, & Nwankwo, 2009).[2] In India, there are many myths and misconceptions about menstruation, as well

as a comprehensive list of “do’s” and “don’ts” for women. For the 1.8 billion girls, women, transgender males, and non-binary people of reproductive age, menstruation is a natural part of life that happens once a month. Despite this, millions of menstruators around the world are denied the right to control their menstrual cycle in a respectful and healthy manner.[3] Menstrual hygiene management involves accessing sanitary facilities to dispose of used sanitary products as well as washing one’s body with water and soap as necessary. [2] Infection of the Reproductive Tract can be caused by unsanitary absorbents or inadequate hygiene during periods. Because the bacteria that cause RTIs can enter the mucosal layer of the reproductive tract and cause significant damage to the uterine wall, ovaries, and fallopian tubes, they can cause reproductive health concerns. Vaginitis and unusual vaginal discharge are two early indications of severe RTI and having access to low-cost sanitary napkins can assist to avoid reproductive complications.[3] Changing sanitary napkins or tampons every 4-6 hours is the gold standard for maintaining vaginal hygiene. Many organisms from our bodies are attracted to the warmth of menstrual blood, multiplying and causing discomfort, rashes, or urinary tract infections. Changing your sanitary napkin or tampon on a regular basis helps to prevent sickness by slowing the growth of hazardous germs.[5] Organisms stick to your body after you remove your sanitary napkin, thus washing your vaginal area on a frequent basis is essential. Most individuals wash their hands on a regular basis, but not in the appropriate manner—that is, from the vagina to the anus, not the other way around. While utilizing vaginal hygiene products is a wonderful idea, don’t overdo it by using them every day.[6] To prevent the spread of infections and diseases, wrap them properly before discarding them. Do not flush them because this will clog the toilet, causing the water to back up and spread the bacteria.[6] Menstrual hygiene management is highly affected by many factors like parental influence, cultural norms, personal choice, and economic status. Menstrual beliefs are the misconceptions and attitudes of people toward menstruation in a given culture. By analyzing so much research, it is clear that many people follow cultural and religious beliefs regarding menstruation. Many women are experiencing restrictions in cooking, bathing, and eating some kind of food because, in some cultures, menstruation is a dirty and impure process in which women can’t go in the kitchen also. She can’t perform prayers also. And these all norms are barriers in the path of women. She can feel frustrated and low for having this kind of restriction on her for 7 days every month.[7]

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Md. Abu Tal Ha and Md. Zakiul Alam (2022), conducted a study on menstrual Hygiene practices among adolescent girls which shows that only 37.7% of girls continuously used sanitary pads. 57% used water and soap to wash them. 44% washed their genitalia three times daily. 55% buried sanitary materials under the soil. Around 36.9% of the girls practiced bad, 33.4% fair, and 29.7% good menstrual management. [8] S., Hema & Nandi (2017), conducted a study on menstrual hygiene practices in rural Puducherry which shows that 89.2% of girls use sanitary pads. 65.3% of girls change their pads 2-5 times per day. 5.8% of girls changing their pad according to need and 19.1% of girls changed their product only once a day. 60.8% of girls burn or bury their used menstrual products while 29.1% of girls dispose of their pads in dustbins. 4.2% of girls wash the product and reuse it and 6% of girls flushing out in the toilet. 67.9% of girls said that they washed their genitalia during menstruation while 12.2% of girls washed their genitalia only during baths. Half of the girls use soap to clean their genitalia. 40% use water only for cleaning and very few girls have a good habit of using antiseptics or intimate wash while 1.4% of girls said that they use mud and Ash for the purpose of cleaning their genitalia.[9] According to S. Pranjali (2019), only 49.3% of girls were aware of menstruation. Moreover, a quarter of the girls were unaware of the cause, and 72% were unaware of the source of the bleeding. According to Rajasri G Yaliwal et al (2020), 16.3% of girls used pads and cloth both as per their needs. 90% of girls had a bath during menstruation. Only 60.3% of urban girls and 41.3% of rural girls could dispose of the pad in the dustbin. 46.5% of rural girls burn their pads. Less than 10% of the girls buried the pads. Over 90% of both groups of girls went to school during their menstruation and 18.6% of the urban and 17.1% of the rural girls skipped school for a day.[10] According to Shantna Kumari (2021), Only 48.67% of adolescent girls were aware of menstruation prior to menarche, and their friends were the most important source of information about menstruation for them, followed by moms.[11] According to Shobha P Shah et al. (2013), 50% of girls had to sit separately from others during menstruation. 89% of them were restricted in what they could touch. One-third of girls had no permission to go outside during their menses. [12]

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the menstrual hygiene management practices among adolescent girls.
- To assess the availability of menstrual products
- To find out the usage and knowledge of menstrual products among adolescent girls.

METHODOLOGY

The study was executed in AMU senior secondary school (girls) which is located in Aligarh, a city of Uttar Pradesh, India on 100 adolescent girls, of which 50 were in class XI and 50 were in class XII of 16-19 years of age. A questionnaire method was used to choose the subject sample as representative of the total population from which it was counted out. secondary data was obtained through textbooks, journals, articles, websites, etc. a self-designed questionnaire was used for collecting data from the respondents.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION**Table 1 -Age of Respondents**

Age	16-17	17-18	18-19
16-19 years	15%	30%	55%

Table 2 Availability of Menstrual products.

Menstrual Products	Flipkart	Amazon
Stay free (6 pads)	20/-	25/-
Whisper (6 pads)	25/-	27/-
Pro-ease (8pads)	35/-	32/-
Nine (6 pads)	22/-	25/-
Sofy (30 pads)	185/-	271/-
Reusable (10 pads)		
1.Peesafe	639/-	699/-
2.Sanfe	652/-	-
3.Re-pad	555/-	640/-
Biodegradable (10 pads)		
1.Sirona		
2.Crimson	104/- 78/-	149/- 80/-
Menstrual-cup (medium)		
1.Sirona (medium)	209/-	269/-
2. Pee safe (medium)	219/-	249/-
3. Crimson (medium)	199/-	259/-

Tampons		
1. Sirona (20 units)	139/-	199/-
2. Pee safe (16 units)	189/-	249/-
3. Everteen (8units)	233/-	281/-

The collected data shows that sanitary napkins are available in a variety like Stayfree, whisper Choice, pro-ease, Sofy, nine, biodegradable, and reusable. And it is found that all of the sanitary napkins are cheaper on Flipkart as compared to Amazon.

Table 3 Usage and knowledge of menstrual products.

Knowledge and usage of respondents	Response (%)
1. Mode of buying	
Online	2%
Shop.	89%
Home.	9%
2. Menstrual product used by respondents	
Sanitary napkins	85%
Menstrual cup	1%
Tampon	0%
Old cloth	13%
3. Knowledge of menstrual cup	
Yes	31%
No	68%
4. Knowledge of Tampons	
Yes	23%
No	77%
5. Knowledge of the size of napkins	
Yes	81%
No	19%
6. Knowledge of biodegradable and	
Non-biodegradable napkins	
Yes	64%
No	36%
7. Brand of sanitary napkins is used mostly.	

Sofy	14%
Stay free	35%
Whisper choice	42%
Biodegradable	9%
8. Cleaning of external genitalia	
Soap and water	46%
Antiseptic solution	11%
Only water	43%

It shows that the majority of the girls buy their menstrual products from shops and used menstrual napkins. More than 50% of girls are unaware of the usage of menstrual cups and Tampons. Half of the respondents have Knowledge about biodegradable and non-biodegradable napkins. Around 40% of girls use Whisper Choice Brand of sanitary napkins and use soap and water to clean external genitalia.

Table 4. Menstrual hygiene practices

Menstrual Hygiene practices.	Response (%)
1. Change of menstrual product during night	
Yes	72%
No	28%
2. Usage of two napkins in excess bleeding	
Yes	59%
No	41%
3. Frequency of cleaning external genitalia	
One	9%
Twice	46%
More	44%
4. Bathing during menstruation	
Yes	62%
No	38%
5. Disposal of menstrual product	
Dustbin	99%
Reuse	1%
6. Way of disposing of menstrual products	
Wrap before disposing of	91%

Disposing of openly	9%
7. Washing hands before cleaning genitalia	
Yes	93%
No	7%
8. Drying underwear inside the room is enough	
Yes	23%
No	77%

The collected data shows that more than 70% of respondents Change their menstrual products during the night. More than 50% of respondents used two napkins in excess bleeding, clean their external genitalia More than one time, take bath during menstruation. About 90% of respondents have good practice of menstrual disposing and hygiene.

CONCLUSION

A huge variety of menstrual products are available in the market on the basis of absorbency, size, and brands. Most of the respondents are unaware of the biodegradable and non-biodegradable sanitary napkins, Menstrual cups, and tampons. The majority belong to MIG and they can't afford biodegradable sanitary napkins so they used non-biodegradable sanitary napkins like Stayfree and whisper Choice because they are cheaper and easily available in the market. They heard the name biodegradable sanitary napkins, Tampons, and Menstrual cups first time. And it is found that all the brands of menstrual products are costly on Amazon as compared to Flipkart. Most of the respondents have good Menstrual hygiene practices they change their Menstrual products more than 3 times in a day. They also used to change their napkins at night. Very few of them used antiseptic solutions to clean external genitalia while the majority used only water or soap and water. More than half of them take bath during their menstruation. More than 90% of them have good knowledge about waste disposal. They dispose of their Menstrual products after wrapping them in the dustbin. And only 30% of girls think that drying undergarments inside the room is sufficient.

SUGGESTIONS

- For an adolescent girl it is very important to take care of reproductive health. So, Menstrual Hygiene should be good because it can save them from many reproductive health issues.
They have to change their menstrual product every 3-4 hours to prevent themselves from infections and diseases.
- They have to change their menstrual product during the night also.
- They should also take Menstrual products with them for emergency cases.
- Changing underwear during periods is a good Menstrual Hygiene practice.
- Biodegradable sanitary napkins are good for the reproductive health of a female because they have fewer or no chemicals. They are made up of natural fibers and are easily decomposable.
- Don't use any antiseptic solution without consulting a doctor.
- Taking a bath on your period isn't just safe, it's also good for you.
- It is better to use reusable pads as compared to nonbiodegradable pads because Reusable Pads create less garbage.
- Before disposing of the menstrual product, always wrap it to make the environment clean and healthy.
- Always dry the undergarments under sunlight because sunlight is the only source of killing germs from the underwear.

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