



A study on knowledge and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in Pauri, Uttarakhand

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Abstract: Adolescent girls often lack knowledge regarding reproductive health including menstruation which can be due to socio-cultural barriers in which they grow up. This study included 1000 adolescent girl students from various schools and inter colleges of urban and rural areas of Pauri. The maximum number of respondents were in the age range of 13-16 yr. They belonged to middle income and lower middle income families. Maximum number of girls attained menarche at the age of 13 years (81%), the mean age of menarche was 11.5 yr with SD 1.290. Thirty nine percent received information about menstruation from their mother whereas 42 percent from their friends. When asked about the and, 83% girls were aware about the right age to bear a child and 98% girls gave right answer about the age at which girl can conceive, but maximum(75%) were ignorant about colostrum. Very less number of respondents (16%) new about family planning. Eighty six percent girls used soap to wash hands after using toilet and 90-94% were aware about hygienic practices pertaining to menstruation.

Keywords: Menarche • menstruation • colostrum • adolescent • hygienic practices

Introduction

Adolescent is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood; which is usually between the age group 11 and 20 years (Terri, 2008). The World Health Organization defines 'Adolescence' as the age group of 10-19 years. Globally there were 1.2 billion adolescent girls in the year 2009, which forms eighteen percent of the world's population. Adolescent girls in India constitute almost 47 percentage of the population (Dawn, 2004).

Adolescence is a significant period in the life of a female. Adolescent girls often lack knowledge regarding reproductive health including menstruation which can be due to socio-cultural barriers in which they grow up.

The first menstruation is termed as "menarche". The age of menarche is between 10- 16 years in India (Jacob, 2008) Menstrual hygiene is the personal hygiene during menstruation. It includes bathing daily for comfort, using clean, dry absorbent material and disposal of used pads or material by clean and safe methods. Adolescent girls face many challenges that affect their academic and lifetime success. In many studies it was observed that when girls have their menstrual period they are likely to stay home from school. Absence can lead to girls falling behind their classmates and much risk dropping out of school.

Objectives

The study is conducted to achieve following objects:

- i. To observe their socio-economic background
- ii. To study their knowledge about reproductive health and personal hygiene
- iii. To study their awareness about menstrual hygiene

Methodology

This study was conducted in twelve high schools and inters colleges of Pauri, Uttarakhand. This study included 1,000 adolescent girl students and some married students from various schools and inters colleges of urban and rural areas of Pauri. Permission for their participation in the study was obtained from District Education Officer, Pauri. Principals of schools and selected girls were explained the aim of the study and assured that all the collected data were confidential and will be used only for the purpose of the study. Each subject was individually interviewed to assess her knowledge and practices about reproductive health, personal and menstrual hygiene. This study was carried out during May 14th to April 15th. The collected data was organized, categorized and tabulated according to the type of each data.

Tools of data collection

Data was collected by using tools; these tools were developed by the researcher based on the established protocol.

Tools Used: A structured interview questionnaire sheet was used. This tool was divided into two parts;

Part I: Related to socio-demographical data of the sample including- age, class, family size, family occupation, income, religion, etc.

Part II: Related to self-care practices during menstruation including sanitation, hygiene care, drink and food restrictions, exercise and treatment, type of pads used, number of pads per day, methods of drying cloth, etc.

Results and Discussion

Respondents Demographic Profile

Table 1 Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents.

Age (Yr)	No. of subjects	%
11-12	168	17
13-14	279	28
15-16	330	33
17-18 and above	223	22
Total	1000	100

Table 2 Class-wise distribution of the Respondents n= 1000.

Class	No.	percent
VIII	166	17
IX	217	22
X	201	20
XI	111	11
XII	292	29
UG	13	1

Table 3 Occupation of the Families of the Respondents.

Occupation	No.	%
Agriculture	528	53
Service	334	33
Business	86	9
Daily wages	13	1
Not mentioned	39	4

Table 4 Religion of the respondents.

Religion	No.	%
Hindu	972	97
Muslim	25	2.5
Christian	03	0.5

This study included total 1,000 adolescent girls and young women of age 11-21yrs. The maximum numbers of respondents were in the age range of 13-16 yr. They belonged to middle income and lower middle income families as most of them were from agriculture families (53%) and employee in government and private jobs (33%). Maximum respondents (97%) belonged to Hindu religion.

Table 5 Age of Menarche in years.

Age of menarche in years	Number	Percent
10	19	1.9
11	21	2.1
12	150	15.0
13	810	81.0
Total	1000	

Source of Information about Menstruation

Maximum number of girls attained menarche at the age of 13 years (81%), the mean age of menarche was 11.5 yr with SD 1.290. Thirty nine percent received information about menstruation from

mother whereas 42 percent from their friends. In another studies it was reported that 71%, 84%, and 88% respondents received information about menstruation from their mothers (Thakre et al., 2011; Kamath and Ghosh, 2013; Tarhane and Kasulkar, 2015).

Table 6 Source of Information about Menstruation.

Source of information about Menarche	Number	Percent
Mother	388	38.8
Friend	420	42.0
Family member	22	2.20
Teacher	80	8.00
Advertisement	90	9.00
Total	1000	

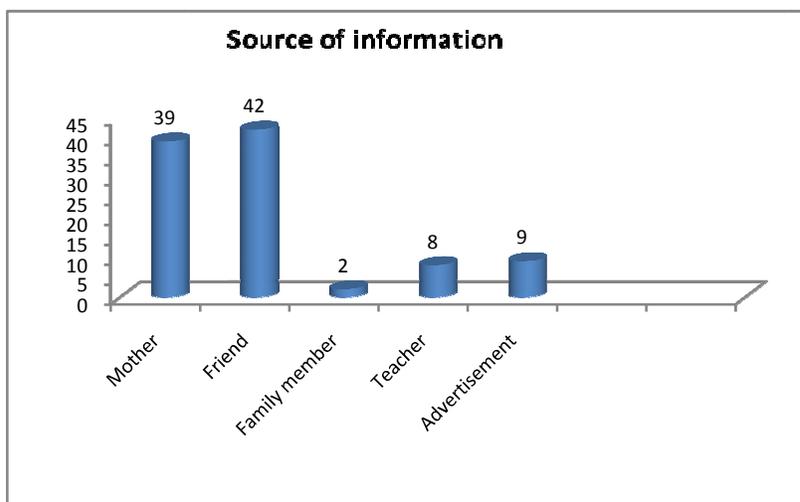


Figure 1 Different sources of information about menstruation.

Maximum respondents (83%) were aware about the right age to become mother and 98% had knowledge about the age at which girls can conceive. When asked about family planning, colostrums, weaning and cleanliness after delivery they had less knowledge as compared to other practices related to menstrual hygiene.

Practices restricted during menstruation

During menses some girls were restricted from performing certain practices. Though 85 percent

adolescents had no restriction on going to school during menstruation. However 10 percent missed school. Seventy percent adolescent girls not attended religious, social and cultural activities during menstruation.

Only six percent respondents used cloth as absorbent during menstruation, maximum number (94%) used sanitary pads. They were using the practice to change the pads (89.5%) twice a day; this was similar to the study done by Sharma et al. (2013).

Table 7 Knowledge of respondents about personal hygiene.

S. No.	Questions about personal hygiene	Response			
		Right answer		Wrong answer	
		No.	%	No.	%
Qu 1	Hygiene is compulsory for good health	1000	100	-	-
Qu 2	Use soap for washing hands (after urination)	861	86	135 (use water only)	14
Qu 3	Use soap for washing hands (after defecation)	870	87	130 (use other material)	13
Qu 4	Toilet facility in school	1000	100	-	-
Qu 5	Dustbins in the toilets	300	30	700 (no dustbins)	70

Table 8 Knowledge of respondents about reproductive health.

S. No.	Questions about reproductive health	Response			
		Right Answer		Wrong Answer	
		No.	%	No.	%
Qu. 1	Age at which girls can conceive	980	98	20	2
Qu. 2	What is proper age for child bearing	834	83	166	17
Qu. 3	When should take bath after delivery	323	32	677	68
Qu. 4	It is harmful to be a mother at adolescent age	716	72	284	28
Qu. 5	Use of contraceptives is safer by male than female	473	47	380 147 (don't know)	38
Qu. 6	Adolescents must be given knowledge of family planning methods	730	73	156 114 (don't know)	16
Qu. 7	When the infant should be given first milk of mother	253	25	747	75
Qu. 8	When the weaning food should be started	872	87	128	13

Table 9 Practices pertaining to menstrual hygiene.

S. No.	Practices pertaining to menstrual hygiene	No.	%
1	Use of cloth during menses	56	6
2	Use of cotton during menses	-	-
3	Use of sanitary pads	944	94
4	Re use the cloth after washing	56	6
5	Change the sanitary pad once in a day	60	6
6	Change the sanitary pad twice in a day	895	89.5
7	Throw sanitary pads in dustbin	944	94

This study included total 1,000 adolescent girls and young women of age 11-21 yrs, the mean age of the respondents was 12.85 ± 0.867 years. Maximum number of girls attained menarche at the age of 13 years (81%), the mean age of menarche was 11.5 ± 1.290 years. It can be concluded that the girls were aware about reproductive health and hygiene but they should be made aware of proper use of health and hygiene practices which are better and are being used in other places. The teachers in schools and mothers at home should be given knowledge about personal and menstrual hygiene so they can educate the adolescent girls in a proper way and can satisfy their curiosities which are common in this age. This can be included in their syllabus and they should be prepared to participate in various health programmes run by government and other agencies.

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