

Original Research Article

## **Awareness of Menstruation & Related Hygiene in Adolescent Girls - A Comparative Research Study**

Dr. Namrata Vaishampayan<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Seema R. Deshpande<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant. Professor (Medicine), MNR Homeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Telangana, India.

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor & HOD (Obs/Gyn), MNR Homeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Telangana, India.

Corresponding Author: Dr. Namrata Vaishampayan

### **ABSTRACT**

**Background** - Puberty or adolescence is one of the most crucial periods of development that changes a child's life. Adolescence is defined as the period of physical and psychological development that begins with the onset of puberty and ends with maturity. While going through this period, children are experiencing various physical & psychological changes. Beginning of Menstruation or menarche is one of the most important changes that occur in adolescent girls. The aim of this study was to assess the awareness about menstruation and related hygiene in the girls of 13-15 yrs.

**Objectives** –To assess the awareness among the girls of 13-15 years old, about menstruation and related hygiene.

-To assess the effect of Information campaigns

**Methods**- 64 Girls aged between 13-15 years & attained menarche were selected for the study. Predesigned questionnaire was used to assess the awareness about menstruation, related practices & hygiene. This pre-test questionnaire was followed by an informative session regarding menstruation & related hygiene. After the session a post-test questionnaire was given to them. The collected data was analysed using SPSS software & Chi square test.

**Result** - Mean age of the study population was 13.90 years. Out of 4 questions, P values for question no.2, 3, 4 are statistically significant (<0.05) which emphasize the role of information campaign.

**Conclusion** – Information campaigns regarding the menstruation and related hygiene have to be conducted time to time among the adolescent girls to improve their reproductive health status as well as health in general.

**Keywords**- Puberty, adolescence, menarche, menstruation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence or puberty is the phase between childhood and adulthood, associated with physical, psychological and behavioral changes. The ultimate aim of puberty is reproduction. This period starts between 10 to 19 yrs of age. <sup>[1]</sup> It is the crucial period which brings number of questions in a girl's mind regarding

menstrual cycle, bodily changes, psychological and behavioral changes etc. Every adolescent girl reacts differently to these changes. It's a high risk period for depression, substance abuse, delinquencies & school drop outs. <sup>[2]</sup> If girls are guided about these changes in advance, it will be helpful for them to pass through this phase smoothly. Proper channel of information

will also prevent them from gathering information from improper sources. [3] The most important change in an adolescent girl is beginning of menstruation or menarche. Menstruation is considered unclean process or a negative phenomenon in the Indian society. [4] Talking about it is also restricted or rather prohibited. A lot of studies show lack of awareness among the girls about menstruation before the occurrence of menarche.

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). [5] The aim & objective of this study was to assess & spread the awareness among the study population regarding process of menstruation & related hygiene.

## METHODS

A cross sectional descriptive analytical study was conducted at MNR School of Excellence, Sangareddy. 64 Girls aged between 13-15 years & attained menarches were selected for the study by census sampling. Predesigned validated questionnaire consisting of questions designed to analyse awareness about menstruation, related practices & hygiene was given to girls. Ethical consent was taken from the school authorities. Girls were explained all the questions in the local language & verbal consents were taken from them. This pre-test questionnaire was followed by a Session regarding menstruation & related hygiene. After the session a post-test questionnaire was given to them. The data collected was analysed using SPSS software & Chi square test.

## RESULT

The mean age of the study population was 13.90 years.

**Table- 1**

Question	Responses				
Age of Menarche	8-10yrs	11-13yrs	14-16		
	1(1.6%)	60(93.75%)	3(4.68%)		
Information before Menarche	Yes	No			
	24(37.5%)	40(62.5%)			
Source of Information	Mother	Sister	Friend		
	9(37.5%)	5(20.8%)	10(41.66%)		
Mother's Educational status	Illiterate	Primary school	High School	Graduate	Post Graduate
	0	7 (10.93%)	34(53.12%)	19(29.68%)	4(6.24%)
Type of absorbent used	Disposable pads	Cloth	others		
	64(100%)	0	0		
Absenteeism due to menstruation	Yes	No			
	14(21.87%)	50(78.12%)			

**Table-2 (Pre-test)**

Question	Responses		
1.Opinion about the Menstruation process	Normal	Disease	
	62(96.87%)	2(3.12%)	
2.Opinion about frequency of change of absorbent	4-6hrs	6-10hrs	After 12 hrs
	31(48.43%)	19(29.60%)	14(21.87%)
3.Opinion about disposal of sanitary pad	Dustbin	Toilet	Others
	60(93.75%)	4(6.25%)	0
4.Opinion about continuation of routine during menstruation	Yes	No	
	54(84.37%)	10 (15.62%)	

**Table -3 (Post-test)**

Question	Responses		
1.Opinion about the Menstruation process	Normal	Disease	
	64(100%)	-	
2.Opinion about frequency of change of absorbent	4-6hrs	6-10hrs	After 12 hrs
	64(100%)	-	-
3.Opinion about disposal of sanitary pad	Dustbin	Toilet	Others
	64(100%)	-	-
4.Opinion about continuation of routine during menstruation	Yes	No	
	62(96.87%)	2(3.12%)	

**Table-4**

Question	Responses	Pre-test (n=64)	Post Test (n=64)	Chi square value	P value	Statistical significance
1.	Normal	62	64	2.032	0.154>0.05	Non-significant
	Disease	2	0			
2.	4-6hrs	31	64	44.463	0.000<0.05	Significant
	6-10hrs	19	0			
	After 12 hrs	14	0			
3.	Dustbin	60	64	4.129	0.042<0.05	Significant
	Toilet	4	0			
	Others	0	0			
4.	Yes	54	62	5.885	0.015<0.05	Significant
	No	10	2			

## DISCUSSION

Table 1- shows the age of menarche. Maximum number of girls (93.75%) attained menarche between 11-13 years of age. From 64 girls, 40girls (62.5%) did not have information about menstruation before they attained menarche. Out of 24 girls (37.50%) who had information about the process of menstruation, maximum (41.66%) have received it from friends which implicates the role of peer group in an adolescent's life. Mother's educational status was assessed to see if there is any correlation between girl's knowledge about menstruation & mothers' education. It was seen that out of 40 girls who did not have information about menstruation, mothers of 24 girls (60%) have completed their high school education, 9 girl's mothers were graduate, 1 was even post graduate & no mother was found to be illiterate. This shows that there is no correlation between the mother's educational status & girl's knowledge about menstruation. All the girls (100%) responded, disposable sanitary pads as a type of absorbent used. 50 girls (78.12%) responded that they don't miss the school due to menstruation whereas 14 girls (21.87%) admitted that they miss the school due to menstruation.

Table 2- (Pre-test) shows girl's awareness about the process of menstruation & associated practices. 62girls (96.87%) opined that menstruation is a normal process. Only 31 girls (48.43%) responded that frequency of changing absorbent should be every 4-6 hours whereas 14 girls (21.87%) said that frequency of changing

absorbent should after every 12 hours. 60 girls (93.75%) said that the sanitary pad should be disposed in the dustbin while 4 girls (6.25%) answered it as toilet. 54girls (84.37%) girls opined that the routine should be continued during menstruation whereas 10 girls (15.62%) responded negatively.

Table 3- (Post-test) shows the change in the awareness about menstruation & associated practices after conduction of an informative session based on menstruation & related hygiene. After the session all 64 girls (100%) termed menstruation as a normal process. All 64 girls (100%) responded that frequency of changing absorbent should be every 4to 6 hours. Dustbin was answered as the ideal way to dispose sanitary pads by everyone. 62girls (96.87%) girls opined that the routine should be continued during menstruation whereas 2 girls (3.12%) refused.

Table 4- shows the difference in the responses in the pre & post test, related P values & its statistical significance. P value (0.000) for question no. 2 which is opinion about frequency of change of absorbent is statistically significant (<0.05). P value (0.042) for question no.3 which is opinion about disposal of sanitary pad is statistically significant (<0.05). P value (0.015) for question no. 4 which is opinion about continuation of routine during menstruation is statistically significant (<0.05). Out of 4 questions, P values for 3 questions (Q.no.2, 3, 4) are statistically significant (<0.05)

which emphasize the role of information campaign.

## CONCLUSION

Information campaigns regarding menstruation and related hygiene have to be conducted time to time among the adolescent girls to improve their reproductive health status as well as health in general.

**Funding:** No funding sources

**Conflict of interest:** None declared

**Ethical approval:** The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee

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How to cite this article: Vaishampayan N, Deshpande SR. Awareness of menstruation & related hygiene in adolescent girls - a comparative research study. *Int J Health Sci Res*. 2019; 9(1):65-68.

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