

Original Research Article

A Study to Assess the Knowledge, Attitude & Practices Regarding Reproductive Health among Adolescent Girls from Secondary School Students of Karad Taluka

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ABSTRACT

Background: Adolescent girls often lack knowledge regarding reproductive health including menstruation hygiene which can be due to socio-cultural barriers in which they grow up.

Objectives: To assess the knowledge, attitude & practices regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students, of Karad taluka, India.

Materials & methods: An epidemiologic study was undertaken using cross-sectional study method among 60 school-going adolescent girls' aged 13-16 years. Non-probability purposive sampling technique was used for data collection. Statistical analysis was done by calculating the percentages of each frequency.

Results: maximum participants were aware about menstruation prior to menarche, and mothers were the main source of information for them. Majority 58(96.66%) of adolescent girls feels menstruation is good for health as well as using sanitary pads during menstruation period as menstrual absorbent.

Conclusions: There is a need to equip the adolescent girls with knowledge regarding safe, hygienic practices to enable them to lead a healthy reproductive life.

Keywords: Adolescent girls, menarche, menstruation, practices

INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are an important resource of any country. According to the WHO expert committee, adolescence is defined as the period between 10-19 yrs, the 2nd decade of life. ^[1] Adolescents comprise 20% of the world's total population, ^[2] out of 1.2 billion adolescents world-wide, about 85% live in developing countries. ^[3] In India

there are 190 million adolescents comprising 21% of India's total population. ^[4]

Adolescence is a significant period in the life of a woman. It is characterized by physical, psychological, and social changes. Adolescent girls often lack knowledge regarding reproductive health including menstruation which can be due to socio-cultural barriers in which they grow up. These differences create various problems

for the adolescent girls. The need of the hour for girls is to have the information, education and an enabling environment to cope with menstruation issues. [5]

The hygiene-related practices of girls in the adolescent period related to menstruation can have an effect on their health. [6] The event of menarche may be associated with taboos and myths existing in our traditional society which has a negative implication for women's health, particularly their menstrual hygiene. [7] Studies have shown that the girls lack knowledge about menstruation and due to lack of hygiene; they are likely to suffer from RTI's. [8,9,10] Attitude of parents and society in discussing the related issues are barriers to the right kind of information, especially in the rural areas. Menstruation is thus construed to be a matter of embarrassment in most cultures. It was therefore decided to conduct a study to assess the level of knowledge and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls from secondary school students, of Karad Taluka.

Aim & Objectives

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.
2. To find out attitude regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students
3. To assess the practices regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample for the present study consisted of 60 adolescent girls between the age group of 13 - 16 years. The sample was chosen from state government schools Vithamata high school Karad on the basis of availability. Non-probability purposive

sampling technique was used. Questionnaire comprising of 20 items was formulated out of that 5 items on demographic data, 4 items on knowledge, 5 items on attitude & 6 items on practices. Pilot study was done on a sample of 10 subjects and further the tool was standardized statistically. The questions that were not clear to the subjects were either deleted or modified. Permission of the Principal of the higher secondary government school was sought and informed written consent was obtained from the subjects. After establishing a good rapport with subjects, they were made aware about the aims and objectives of study. The questionnaire was then distributed to the selected subjects with the help of the 3rd year GNM students. The data obtained was compiled, stating the frequency of every response in each item and then transcribed on a master sheet. Statistical analysis was done by calculating the percentages of each frequency. Tables and graphs were drawn stating the results of the present study.

Analysis and interpretation of the data was based on the projected objectives of the study viz.:

1. To assess the level of knowledge regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.
2. To find out attitude regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students
3. To assess the practices regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.

The data was organized under the following headings:

1. Distribution of sample characteristic in terms of frequency & percentage according to demographic variables of respondents.

2. Distribution of knowledge in terms of frequency & percentage regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.
3. Distribution of attitude in terms of frequency & percentage regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.
4. Distribution of practices in terms of frequency & percentage regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.

RESULT

Table No. 1-Frequency & percentage Distribution of sample characteristic according to demographic variables of respondents.
N=60

Sr. no.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age-		
	12 to 13 years	0	0%
	13 to 14 years	26	43.33%
	14 to 15 years	30	50%
	15 to 16 year	04	6.66%
2	Religion-		
	Hindu	46	76.66%
	Muslim	06	10%
	Boudh	02	3.33%
	Christian	01	1.66%
	Others	05	8.33%
3	Type of family		
	Joint family	37	61.66%
	Nuclear family	22	36.66%
	Extended family	01	1.66%
4	Source of Information		
	Mother	55	91.66%
	Sister	02	3.33%
	Friend	02	3.33%
	Health worker	01	1.66%
	Other	0	0%

A total 60 adolescent girls from urban area at Vithamata high school Karad were participated in the study. The age of menarche in this study ranged from 12 to 16 years with the maximum 30 (50%) number of girls was 14 - 15 years of age. Maximum numbers of adolescent girls are from Hindu religion 76.66% & from joint family 61.66% where as minimum numbers of adolescent girls are from Christian & extended family is 1.66%. Source of the information for most

of the respondents is the mother 91.66% & 3.33% is the sister & friends & very few respondents 1.66% got information from health workers. Most of the respondents 50% started their menstruation at the age of 15 years, 43.33% started at 14 years & 6.66% started at 16 years.

Table No. 2 - Frequency & percentage Distribution of sample characteristic according to knowledge regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.
N=60

Sr. no.	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
1	Cause of monthly period		
	Sin	60	100%
2	Physiological change		
	Don't know		
	15 -20 days	01	1.66%
	21 -25 days	01	1.66%
3	26 -30 days	08	13.33%
	28-30 days	50	83.33%
	Duration of Menstrual bleeding		
4	4 days	02	3.33%
	5 days	39	65%
	6 days	03	5%
	7 days	16	26.66%
5	Menstrual bleeding is deoxygenated bleeding		
	deoxygenated bleeding	58	96.66%
	none of this	02	3.33%
	State of mind changing during menstruation		
	Yes	44	73.33%
	No	16	26.66%

On assessing for knowledge on the process of menstruation table 2 shows that the 100% adolescent girls knew that menstruation is the physiological process. Majority of adolescent girls 65% having knowledge about the interval between menstrual cycles, they knew that the normal range was between 26-30 days where as 96.66% were aware about the normal duration of the menstrual bleeding. Most of the respondents 73.33 % responded that the state of mind changing during menstruation & 96.66% adolescent girls knew that menstrual bleeding are deoxygenated bleeding.

Table 3 predicts the results of practices regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students; it shows that majority of adolescent girls 47(78.33%) throwing pads in dust bin after washing. Majority of adolescent girls 34(56.66%) changing pads every 6 hourly & very few 02 (3.33%) are changing every 4 hourly. 50(83.33%) adolescent girls are doing exercise during menstruation period also & 100% of adolescent girls are taking balance diet as well as taking care of reproductive organ during menstruation.

Table No. 3 - Frequency & percentage Distribution of sample characteristic according to practices regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.
N=60

Sr. no.	variable	Frequency	percentage
1	Disposal of pads after washing throwing in dust bin burning throwing as it is	47 02 11	78.33% 3.33% 18.33%
2	Duration for changing pads 4 hrs 5 hrs 6 hrs 8 hrs	2 6 34 18	3.33% 10% 56.66% 30%
3	Care taken of reproductive organ during period yes no	60	100%
4	Exercise during period yes no	50 10	83.33% 16.66%
5	Taking balance diet during period yes no	60	1 00%

Table no. 4 shows that majority of adolescent girls 56(93.33%) are not sitting outside during menstruation whereas maximum 58(96.66%) of them says that Menstruation is good for health. Few girls' 14(23.33%) feels menstruation is bad during festival, majority 26 943.33%) of adolescent girl's shows restlessness during first menses & very few 9(15%) feels very bad. Majority 58(96.66%) of adolescent girls were using sanitary pads during menstruation period.

Table No. 4 - Frequency & percentage Distribution of sample characteristic according to attitude regarding reproductive health among adolescent girls from secondary school students.

N=60

Sr. no.	variable	Frequency	percentage
1	During menstruation sitting outside yes no	4 56	6.66% 93.33%
2	Menstruation is good for health yes no	58 2	96.66% 3.33%
3	During festival menstruation is bad yes no	14 46	23.33% 76.66%
4	Reaction during first menses fear very bad restlessness nothing	13 9 26 12	21.66% 15% 43.33% 20%
5	What you use during menstruation period dirty cloth sanitary pad any cloth	0 58 02	0% 96.66% 3.33%

DISCUSSION

The age of menarche in this study ranged from 12 to 16 years with the maximum 30 (50%) number of girls were 14- 15 years of age which is comparable to the study conducted by Kamath R et al who reported the overall mean age of 13.98 years in Rajasthan by Khanna A et al who reported the mean age at menarche to be 13.2 years and a study conducted by Kajal Jain, where mean age at menarche was noted to be 13.16 years while Deo DS and Ghattargi CH highlighted that the age of menarche in their study ranged from 12 to 17 years with the maximum number of girls between 13 and 15 years of age. Mothers were the more common sources of information reported by participants in this study. Similar findings were reported by other authors Kamath R et al who where reported that the mother was the first informant followed by friends & sisters. An Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) study and research carried out by A Dasgupta A and Sarkar M, Omidvar S and

Begum K, Ray Sudhesna and other researchers also reported similar findings. [11]

In This study the participant shows varied reactions to menarche may depend on the extent to which the girls have been prepared regarding the same. Fear, feels very bad and restlessness was the reaction observed in the study but the some participant 12 (20%) reported that they accepted it positively with previous knowledge similar finding were reported by Kamath R et al 21.5% girls from urban & rural have not shown any reaction during menses whereas contras reporting done in study conducted by Shubha Dube and Kirti Sharma and Deo DS and Ghattargi CH Majority 88.5% of urban participants and 96.1% of rural participants expressed negative reactions to menstruation. It highlighted the fact that girls with no previous knowledge about menstruation felt more scared at menarche. These negative feelings associated with menstruation could be because of participants not being psychologically prepared for attaining menarche which is an important milestone in their life. It is observed in the present study that use of sanitary napkin is higher among adolescent girls, similar findings reported in the study conducted by Kamath R et al that use of sanitary napkin is higher in the urban area (75.9%) compared to rural participants (65%) and this could be due to the awareness and literacy of the mothers. [11]

CONCLUSION

There is a need to provide education and equip them with skills regarding safe and hygienic practices and to make appropriate choices so as to enable them to lead a healthy reproductive life and prevent the risk for reproductive tract infections. There is also a need to empower mothers, health workers and teachers to function as primary sources of information on

menstruation including reproductive health as they are accessible to handle adolescent issues and facilitate referrals as the need arises.

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