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KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AMONG ADOLESCENT GIRLS AT A SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL AT GAZIPUR DISTRICT, BANGLADESH.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Menstruation is unique to females and is part of the female reproductive cycle that starts at puberty. Even though menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several misconceptions and malpractices which may result in adverse health outcomes. Poor hygiene during menstruation has been associated with serious ill-health, including reproductive tract and urinary tract infections. **Materials and Methods**: It was a cross sectional study carried out in a selected school at Sreepur upazilla, Gazipur District. A total of 106 purposively selected participants took part in the study. The study was conducted from January 2018 to January 2019. Data were collected by face-to-face interview with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire. **Results**: From the total respondents, 76.4% were read in class nine and rest 23.6% respondents were read in class eight. 16.0% had Superstition about menstruation and 85.8% respondents missed school during menstruation. Here, 79.2% used sanitary pad during menstruation, only 3.8% respondents Changed Pad/cloth at 4 hour interval, 95.7% washed cloth with soap, 17.4% respondents Dried cloth by sun light, 90.6% respondents took daily bath during menstruation, 8.5% had Vaginal itching during menstruation, 96.2% knew Necessity to maintain hygiene during menstruation and 69.8% took more food and plenty of water during menstruation. **Conclusion:** In order to realize girls' empower enhance gender equality; emphasis should be given for the need of girls' preparedness for menarche and sanitary disposal facilities at school and at a community level. Increasing mother's awareness about menstruation and its hygienic management and encouraging daughter-mother communication is justified based on the findings of this study. Including menstruation management in elementary school education could help involvement of boys too.

KEYWORD: Menstruation, Menstrual cycle, Menarche, Menstrual hygiene, Adolescent girls.

I. INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a normal physiological process which marks the beginning of reproductive life in a woman. Menarche is a new phase of life. It is essential to explain about menstruation to every girl. There should be a psychological preparation for the onset of menstruation. But it is seen that there is a culture of silence which surrounds menarche, most of them are previously unaware that this will happen. The girls should be provided an emotional support that menstruation is good and healthy and not bad, and frightening or embarrassing. A supportive environment for menstrual hygiene has to be provided both at home and in school.[1]

Bangladesh is an Islamic country and about 93.5% respondents were Muslim. It was believed that, women were ritually impure or weird during menstruationperiod. During winter, they didn't get enough cloths because they ''pollute'' those cloths unnecessarily. By Islamic law, a girl can't touch holy Quran, can't fast or can't pray during menstruation.[2]

The impacts of poor menstrual hygiene on health are not extensively described in the medical literature. Swedish women were significantly more likely to experience regular bouts of candidacies if they used sanitary pads rather than tampons.[3] None of these studies attempted to prove a link between using dirty sanitary towels and getting vaginal or urinary tract infections, although several authors who have studied menstrual management in low- income countries have postulated that the link exists.[4]

Menstruation; is unique to females and is part of the female reproductive cycle that starts at puberty.[5,6] Even

though menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several misconceptions and malpractices which may result in adverse health outcomes. Poor hygiene during menstruation has been associated with serious ill- health, including reproductive tract and urinary tract infections.[6,7] During menarche, girls experience different feelings including fear, shame and guilt because of lack of prior information about menstruation.[8]

A study done among Nigerian secondary school girls revealed that adolescent girls gave different meanings to menstruation and perceived it as physiological process, as an assurance of fecundity, and as a release of 'bad blood'.[9]

According to estimates of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), about one in ten school-age African girl didn't attend school during menstruation or dropped out at puberty due to lack of cleanliness and separate toilet facilities for female students at schools.[10] Therefore, this study conducted to find out the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls at a high school.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Study Design: Cross sectional with quantitative study was carried out.

Study place: The study was conducted in a selected school at Sreepur upazilla Gazipur Bangladesh.

Study period: The study period was 1 year started from January 2018 to January 2019.

Study population: The study population was Adolescent girls with experienced of menstruation in Gazipur District.

Sampling Method: Purposive sampling was done to collect data. Sample size of the study was 106.

Eligibility criteria: Adolescent girls with in experienced of menstruation willing to participate in the study.

Research Approach: Data were collected by face-to-face interview with the help of a semi-structured questionnaire.

Data processing and analyses: All the data were checked and edited after collection. Data were then entered into computer, with the help of SPSS for Windows (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 26). An analysis plan was developed keeping in view with the objectives of the study. Statistical analyses were be done by using appropriate statistical tool.

Data quality management: Data quality was strictly maintained in every stages of data collection, interpretation, analysis. Tools and instruments were checked every day. At the end of each day of data collection, each questionnaire was checked to see whether it was filled up completely and consistently.

Ethical issues: The study was done through collection of data using questionnaire and neither any intervention nor any invasive procedures was be undertaken. However, prior to initiation of the study ethical clearance was taken from appropriate Ethical Committee.

III. RESULT

The cross sectional type of descriptive study was conducted in order to find out the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls at a high school with a sample size of 106. A semi structured, pre tested, modified and self-administrated questionnaires was used to collect the information.

Table-1 shows the socio-demographic distribution of the respondents. From the total respondents 87.7% belonged to 14-15 years' age group, followed by 6.6% belonged to >15 years age group, 5.7% belonged to <14years age group. From them, 76.4% were read in class nine andrest 23.6% respondents were read in class eight. Out of total respondents 86.8% were from nuclear family and rest of 13.2% respondents were from joint family and 84.9% respondents monthly family income was BDT <10000 followed by 14.2% was BDT 10000-20000 and 0.9% was BDT >20000.

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by socio-demographic information (n=106).

Age(years)	Frequency	Percent
<14	6	5.7
14-15	93	87.7
>15	7	6.6
Mean ±SD =2.01±0.352		
Education of the respondents		
Class eight	23	23.6
Class nine	83	76.4
Types of Family		
Nuclear family	92	86.8
Joint family	14	13.2
Monthly Income (BDT)		
<10000	90	84.9
10000-20000	15	14.2
>20000	1	.9
Total	106	100.0
Mean ±SD =1.15±0.394		

Table-2 shows the problem related to menstruation. Here, majority of the respondents (93.4%) had pain during menstruation, 90.6% had anxiety during menstruation, 90.6% Knew harmful for runs or dance during menstruation, 94.3% were Unable to walk far during menstruation, 97.2% had Loss of appetite during menstruation, 16.0% had Superstition about menstruation. And 85.8% respondents missed school during menstruation.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents by problem related to menstruation (n=106).

Pain duringmenstruation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	99	93.4
No	7	6.6
Anxiety during menstruation		
Yes	96	90.6
No	10	9.4
Harmful for runs or dance		
Yes	96	90.6
No	10	9.4
Total	106	100.0
Unable walk far		
Yes	100	94.3
No	6	5.7
Total	106	100.0
Loss of appetite		
Yes	103	97.2
No	3	2.8
Feeling Superstition		
Yes	17	16.0
No	89	84.0
Miss school during menstruation		
Yes	90	85.8%
No	16	14.2%
Total	106	100.0

Table-3 shows the Hygiene related to menstruation. From the total respondents, 79.2% used sanitary pad during menstruation, only 3.8% respondents Changed Pad/cloth at 4 hour interval, 95.7% washed cloth with soap, 17.4% respondents Dried cloth by sun light, 90.6% respondents took daily bath during menstruation, 8.5% had Vaginal itching during menstruation, 96.2% knew Necessity to maintain hygiene during menstruation and 69.8% took more food and plenty of water during menstruation.

Table 3: distribution of the respondents by Hygiene related to menstruation (n=106).

Using sanitary pad	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	79.2
No	22	20.8
Changing Pad/cloth at 4 hour interval		
Yes	4	3.8
No	102	96.2
Washing cloth with soap		
Yes	22	95.7
No	1	4.3
Drying cloth by sun light		
Yes	19	17.4%
No	87	82.6%
Taking daily bath		
Yes	96	90.6
No	10	9.4
Vaginal itching		
Yes	9	8.5
No	97	91.5
Necessity to maintain hygiene		
Yes	102	96.2
No	4	3.8
Taking more food and plenty of water		
Yes	74	69.8
No	32	30.2
Total	106	100.0

IV. DISCUSSION

This descriptive type of cross sectional study was conducted in order to find out the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls at a selected high school at gazipur district with a sample size of 106. Menstruation is a normal physiology in females. The results of this study suggested that girls in the study area were forced to abstain and drop out of school because of menstrual management facilities at school. The fact that about half of the students did not have the right knowledge about menstruation suggests that adolescent reproductive health needs is neglected in rural areas of gazipur, Bangladesh and is a gray area for intervention in light of increasing girls' school enrollment during menstrual period. Menstruation and its related problems had influenced girl students to drop out their education reasons for not using disposable sanitary napkins because of lack of knowledge, high cost, unavailability, shyness and mothers' restriction not to use sanitary napkins and/or disposal problem. Promotion of healthy sexual maturation and prevention of diseases are among the key reasons for menstrual hygiene. Our study found that majority of the school girls used sanitary pads during their last menstruation. But they did not changed pad in 4 hour interval. The reasons for not using disposable sanitary napkins might be related to different factors. In order to realize girls' empower enhance gender equality; emphasis should be given for the need of girls' preparedness for menarche and sanitary disposal facilities at school and at a community level. Increasing mother's awareness about menstruation and its hygienic management and encouraging daughter-mother communication is justified based on the findings of this study. Including menstruation management in elementary school education could help involvement of boys too.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

- Science mothers are the source of information of the majority of the girls, advocacy educational program should launched targeting mothers and how they should encourage the girls to maintain proper menstrual hygiene.
- School should be another entry point for improving menstrual health by integrating Menstrual Hygiene. This can be achieved through special educational program in school curriculum, along with involvement of parents.
- The above findings reinforce the need to encourage safe and hygienic practice among the Adolescent Girls to bring them out of traditional cleaning and drying techniques.
- Policy makers should also give special attention towards making schools a comfortable place for girls.

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Conflict of interest: None to declare.

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