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Short Note

A study on menstruation among adolescent girls in Palam valley of Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract

The study was conducted in Panchrukhi and Bhawarna blocks of Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh. A total sample of 100 adolescent girls (14-18 years) was selected. The level of knowledge and awareness improved after giving intervention for six months. Before intervention adolescent girls had little knowledge and awareness regarding menstruation. The intervention had profound impact on adolescent girls in respect to such aspect.

Key words: Intervention, menstruation and adolescents.

The status of girl child all over the world has lately become a focus of national and international concerns. The struggle for improving the status of girls or women began in the nineteenth century. Declaration of international women decade has indicated deliberation at various forums on women or girls into the main stream of development. Knowledge of menstruation is essential at adolescent age. Most of the adolescent girls in India have little knowledge of. menstruation. When a girl reaches puberty a hormone is produced by a part of her brain. This hormone reaches her ovaries and stimulates one of the unripe eggs, which gets released and move into the fallopian tube connecting the uterus. The egg takes about a week to get into the uterus. The womb or uterus gets ready to receive the egg. If there is no fertilization, the lining of the uterus thickness breaks off and comes out though the vagina with some blood and this is menstrual bleeding. Menarche or the first menstruation occurs around 12-15 years. This consists of a flow of sticking blood in small amounts from the vagina that may last for 4-5 days.

During each month distinct changes take place in the uterus. Each menstrual cycle is measured from the first day of the menstrual period to the first of the next period, which consists of 28 days. Any cycle slightly shorter or longer is quite normal. Each menstrual cycle lasts for 4-5 days in a month. Menstruation can be effected by the routine such as going away on holidays, emotional changes, and exertion, doing rigorous exercise. But if periods are always irregular doctor should be consulted.

The study was conducted in Bhawarna and Panchrukhi blocks of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. Two schools from each block were selected. From selected schools a total of 100 adolescent girls (14-18 years) were selected i.e. 25 girls from each school. The tool for data collection was self-structured interview schedules. The data collected from adolescent girls in order to meet the requirements of various objectives of the present study. Pre testing of self-structured schedule was carried out in order to test the existing level of knowledge and awareness regarding menstruation and process of menstruation etc. Pre testing was carried out on 100 girls. Intervention was given for a period of six months. After this post testing was carried out to know the impact of intervention on adolescent girls. The data was collected through personal interview method by visiting each respondent personally at school. Analytical framework includes the tabulation of the data and statistical analysis

Knowledge of menstruation is essential at this stage. The result of the present study shows that in pre testing adolescent girls had a little knowledge of menstruation process but after post testing majority of the respondents had knowledge of menstruation process. It is evident from the Table 1 that (37%) of the respondents reported that their onset of menstruation was at 14years followed by one-fourth respondent, who reported that they attained puberty at 15 years of age. After a gap of six months, the knowledge

remained same at onset age of menstruation. About one third of girls (34%) were aware of the gap between two menstruation periods, as 26-30 days whereas 31% of respondents were aware of the gap between two menstruation periods was more than 31 days. The result of this study was similar with the findings of the Health Goals (1999) that the average age of menarche is 13.4 years, yet 50 percent of the girls aged 12-15 years do not know about menstruation. About 34 percent of the respondents were having 26-30days gap in menstruation cycle.

Table 1. Knowledge and awareness regarding menstruation

Characteristics	Number (n = 100)	
Onset age of menstruation	Pre test	Post test
13 years	12 (12%)	12 (12%)
14 years	37(37%)	37(37%)
15 years	25(25%)	25(25%)
16 years	20(20%)	20(20%)
Total	94(94%)	94(94%)
The gap between two menstruation periods		
20-25 days	29 (29%)	29 (29%)
26-30 days	34 (34%)	34 (34%)
More than 31 days	31 (31%)	31 (31%)
Total	94 (94%)	94 (94%)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

It is clear from the table 2 that three fourth of the respondents had stomachache followed by little than half of the respondents had backache problem. Majority of the respondents were not aware of any treatment during menstruated problems whereas after intervention half of the girls became aware of home treatment during menstrual problems, only one tenth of the respondents got awareness about home remedy and 15% about allopathic treatment. Less than three fourth (68%) of the respondents were aware about taking bath daily during menstruation period whereas during post testing the number of respondents increased up to 75%. One fifth of girls were aware of taking bath after one day but during post testing, the number increased to 19%. Pre test knowledge was little more than one third of the respondent (36%) had knowledge of changing clothes during menstruation But post test knowledge increased among respondents (40%). During Pre testing (54%) of girls had knowledge regarding the use of home made napkins which decreased to 43% after educational intervention. Only one-fourth (24%) girls were aware of use of ready-made napkins whereas after intervention it was 40 per cent. Kumar (2004) studied that only 12 percent of the urban and 3 percent of the rural girls had prior knowledge regarding menstruation and 75 per cent of the girls were using old clothes as sanitary napkins.

Table 2. Knowledge regarding process of menstruation

Characteristics of Menstruation	Number (n = 100)	
Health problems during menstruation	Pre test	Post test
Stomachache	71(71%)	71(71%)
Backache	45(45%)	45(45%)
Headache	5(5%)	5(5%)
Treatment		
Home made remedy	3(3%)	10(10%)
Allopathic	1(1%)	15(15%)
Homeopathic	0	16(16%)
No treatment	90(90%)	53(53%)
Take bath during these days		
Daily	68(68%)	75(75%)
After one days	20(20%)	19(19%)
After two days	6(6%)	-
After third days	-	-
Change clothes during menstruation		
Daily	27(27%)	27(27%)
After one days	36(36%)	40(40%)
After two days	31(31%)	27(27%)
After third days	-	-
Napkins use during menstruation		
Home made	54(54%)	43(43%)
Ready made	24(24%)	40(40%)
Mixed	16(16%)	11(11%)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Table 3. Food avoid during menstruation

Characteristics	Number (n=100)	
Food Avoid	Pre test	Post test
Non vegetarian food	10(10%)	65(65%)
Sour / Sweet Food	59(59%)	70 (70%)
Curd	7(7%)	50(50%)

Figures in parentheses indicate the percentage

Table 3 indicated that in pre-testing majority (59%) of the respondents were having awareness of food avoided during menstruation that was sour / sweet food because eating these foods results in heavy bleeding and backache and minimum (7 %) were having awareness of curd and in post-testing maximum (70%) of the respondents were having awareness of food avoided during menstruation that was sour/sweet food and minimum (50%) were having awareness of avoiding curd during menstruation.

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