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Awareness campaign among school going girls in Jammu district regarding Menstrual Hygiene

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ABSTRACT

For billions of women and girls worldwide, menstruation is a monthly reality. Yet in many countries, people still face serious challenges when it comes to managing their periods. Myths, stigma and harmful gender norms around menstruation exacerbate the difficulties for girls and women across the world. Menstruation and menstrual practices are still clouded by taboos and socio-cultural restrictions resulting in adolescent girls remaining ignorant of the scientific facts and hygienic health practices, which sometimes result into adverse health outcome. Menstruation is a phenomenon unique to the females. The onset of menstruation is one of the most important changes occurring among the girls during the adolescent years. The first menstruation (menarche) occurs between 11 and 15 years with a mean of 13 years. There is a need to aware girls about the myths, safe practices and menstrual hygiene.

Key words: Menstrual hygiene, Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The transition period between the childhood and adulthood is called adolescence which is marked with the growth and development of the child. During this period, physical, psychological, and biological development of the child occurs.^[1,2] It is recognized as a special period in a girl's life cycle which requires special attention. Menarche is an important biological milestone in a woman's life as it marks the onset of the reproductive phase of her life. The average age at menarche is mostly consistent across the populations that is, between 12 and 13 years of age.^[3, 4]

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Unfortunately, due to lack of knowledge on menstruation preparedness and management or due to shyness and embarrassment the situation becomes worse for girls.^[5] Menstruation is a natural process but it is still a taboo in Indian society as it is considered unclean and dirty.^[6] Practices related to menstruation hygiene are of major concern as it has a health impact; if neglected, it leads to toxic shock syndrome, reproductive tract infections (RTI), and other vaginal diseases.^[7,8] Poor genital hygiene negatively affects adolescents' health. Most girls are unaware and unprepared for menarche as they are not informed or ill-informed about menstruation.^[9]

OBJECTIVE

To increase awareness about Menstrual hygiene among school going girls.

METHODOLOGY

Students of third year BAMS JIAR were divided into groups and they visited different govt. and private schools in Jammu District. A awareness lecture and health talk was given by them to school girls and they were updated about menstrual hygiene. 10 schools

were covered and around 200 girls were included. Classes from 7 to 12 were covered.

RESULT

During feedback it was noticed that before many girls were not having knowledge about hygiene practices during menses and many girls were having myths that was cleared during the drive. A safe way of pads disposal were told and they got a knowledge and complete awareness about menstrual hygiene. During the drive it was also noticed that many girls were not having awareness about menses and how to have safe and hygienic menses.

CONCLUSION

Reproductive tract infections, which has become a silent epidemic that devastates women's life is closely interrelated with poor menstrual hygiene. Therefore there is a need for proper menstrual hygiene and to aware girls and their perceptions and beliefs regarding menstrual hygiene. Before bringing any change in menstrual practices, the girls should be educated about the facts of menstruation, physiological implications, about the significance of menstruation and development of secondary sexual characteristics, and above all, about proper hygienic practices with selection of disposable sanitary menstrual absorbent. There is a great need to give them exposure of educational television programmes, school nurses/health personnel, compulsory sex education in school curriculum. All mothers irrespective of their educational status should be taught to break their inhibitions about discussing with their daughters regarding menstruation much before the age of menarche. Universalized use of sanitary pads can be advocated to every girl only by making it available at affordable prices (social marketing).

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