

## A Study to Assess the Knowledge and Practice Regarding Menstrual Hygiene with a View to Conduct an Educational Program among Adolescent Girls : A Narrative Review

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### Abstract

*Introduction:* Adolescence is the period of transition from childhood to maturity with rapid physical, intellectual, emotional and social growth. Menstrual hygiene includes all those measures taken by the individual to keep the genital area clean and dry during the menstrual period/cycle. Through various studies, the investigator came to know that adolescent girls who does not have adequate knowledge and practice regarding good menstrual hygiene has a great impact on the health of the adolescent girls such as reproductive tract infections, pelvic inflammatory diseases and other complications. *Aim:* The aim of this narrative review is to find information on the knowledge and practice regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls. *Methodology: Types of studies-* Descriptive study, descriptive cross sectional study, cross sectional study, cross-section school based study. *Types of participants-* Adolescent girls. *Setting-* Schools, village, slums, orphanages. *Outcome-* This narrative review result has appeared that most of the adolescent girls were not having enough knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and were not fully aware about good menstrual hygiene practice.

**Keywords:** Knowledge; Practice; Menstrual hygiene; Educational program; Adolescent girls.

### Introduction or Background

WHO defines adolescent as a period of life that extends from 10 years to 19 years.<sup>1</sup>

According to UNICEF data, updated 2016, there

are about 1.2 billion adolescents aged 10-19 years today which makes 16% of the world's population. In Asia, more than half of all adolescents are there.<sup>2</sup>

Menstrual hygiene includes all those measures taken by the individual to keep the genital area clean and dry during the menstrual period/cycle. Menstrual hygiene matters is an importance resource to improve menstrual hygiene among women and girls in both lower and middle-income countries.<sup>3</sup>

A descriptive study was done among the adolescent girls of Dignagar village, between aged 13-16 yrs. The Dignagar village under Dignagar II Gram Panchayat is located in Aushgram I Tehsil of Block of Burdwan District in West Bengal. Total no of 100 Sample adolescent girls were selected through purposive sampling method. The results of the study have been found out

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that 45% of respondents knew about menstrual cycle before their menarche. In majority of the samples (60%), their first informant were their peer group followed by mothers. Most of the girls in the study were not aware of the cause and the source of the bleeding. Majority of the adolescent girls had knowledge regarding the use of sanitary pads during menstruation but still now 34% of them use old cloths. All of them practices one or more cultural taboos and restrictions related to menstruation.<sup>4</sup>

A cross sectional study was conducted among 761 adolescent girls in the age group of 14 to 17 years at 3 schools in Kattankudy area, Batticaloa district. The results of the study have been found that the average level of menstrual hygiene practices was < 50% in 613 (80.6%) samples, 50-75% in 148 (19.45%) and none of them practiced >75% of proper menstrual hygiene. Average level of hygiene practices was comparatively high among girls who belonged to higher socio-economic groups and those who had access to a covered toilet.

So the study concluded that there is deficiency in menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent school girls. It is important that there must be intense education reinforcing all the components of menstrual hygiene practices. Strategies such as access to water and sanitation may play a vital role in adopting safe practices.<sup>5</sup>

A descriptive cross sectional study among 282 adolescent girls in slums in Kathmandu district using convenient technique. The results of the study have been found out that less than half 121 (42.9%) had adequate knowledge about menstruation and menstrual hygiene. Two-third 185 (65.6%) of the participants used sanitary pads, 183 (98.9%), washed their hands after changing pads, 271 (96.1%) of them cleaned perineal area during menstruation, 227 (80.5%) of them were aware about the myth and 61.9% followed social norms and restrictions related to menstruation.

So the study concluded that more than half of adolescent girls of slums in Kathmandu district had inadequate knowledge regarding menstruation and two-third practiced menstrual hygiene.<sup>6</sup>

A descriptive survey was conducted among 150 adolescent girls residing in selected orphanages of Haryana. The results of the study have shown that more than half of adolescent girls (62.7%) were in age group of 12-15 years. Half (50.7%) of adolescent girls had menarche at the age of 12 years.

Only 16% adolescent girls had good knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene. 95.3% of them were using sanitary pad during menstruation. So the study concluded that the adolescent girls had poor knowledge regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene.<sup>7</sup>

A cross sectional study was conducted among 1522 adolescent girls age group between 13-18 years from IX to XI std. who had attained menarche in 3 schools in South Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The results of the study have been shown that the average level of menstrual hygiene practices was <50% in 1226 (80.6%) samples, 50-75% in 296 (19.45%) and none of them practiced >75% of proper menstrual hygiene. Average level of hygiene practices was comparatively high among girls who belonged to higher socio-economic groups (p value = 0.003) and those who had access to a covered toilet (p value = 0.000).

So the study concluded that there is deficiency in menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent school girls. It is important that there must be intense education reinforcing all the components of menstrual hygiene practices. Strategies such as access to water and sanitation may play a vital role in following safe menstrual hygiene practices.<sup>8</sup>

A cross-sectional study was conducted among 400 adolescent girls of Achrol, Jaipur, Rajasthan between the age group of 10-19 years from January 2015 to June 2016. The results of the study was found that majority of the girls (85.5%) were using sanitary pads, most of them belonged to middle income group. Cleaning of genitals after urination and changing pads was seen in 73.5% and 73.2% of the adolescent girls respectively. 85.5% of the girls disposed their pads in the dustbin.

However there were 14.5% girls who used cloth during menstruation and washed and reused it. So the study concluded that almost 90% i.e. 85.5% of the adolescent girls used sanitary pads instead of cloth and at least 75% i.e. 73.5% practiced cleaning of genitals after urination. Though a majority of the girls were aware of the use of proper menstrual absorbent and the proper disposal of the used pads, still proper training and health education (by family members, teachers, health educators and media) should be imparted so that there won't be any misconception regarding menstrual hygiene amongst the adolescent girls.<sup>9</sup>

**Material and Method**

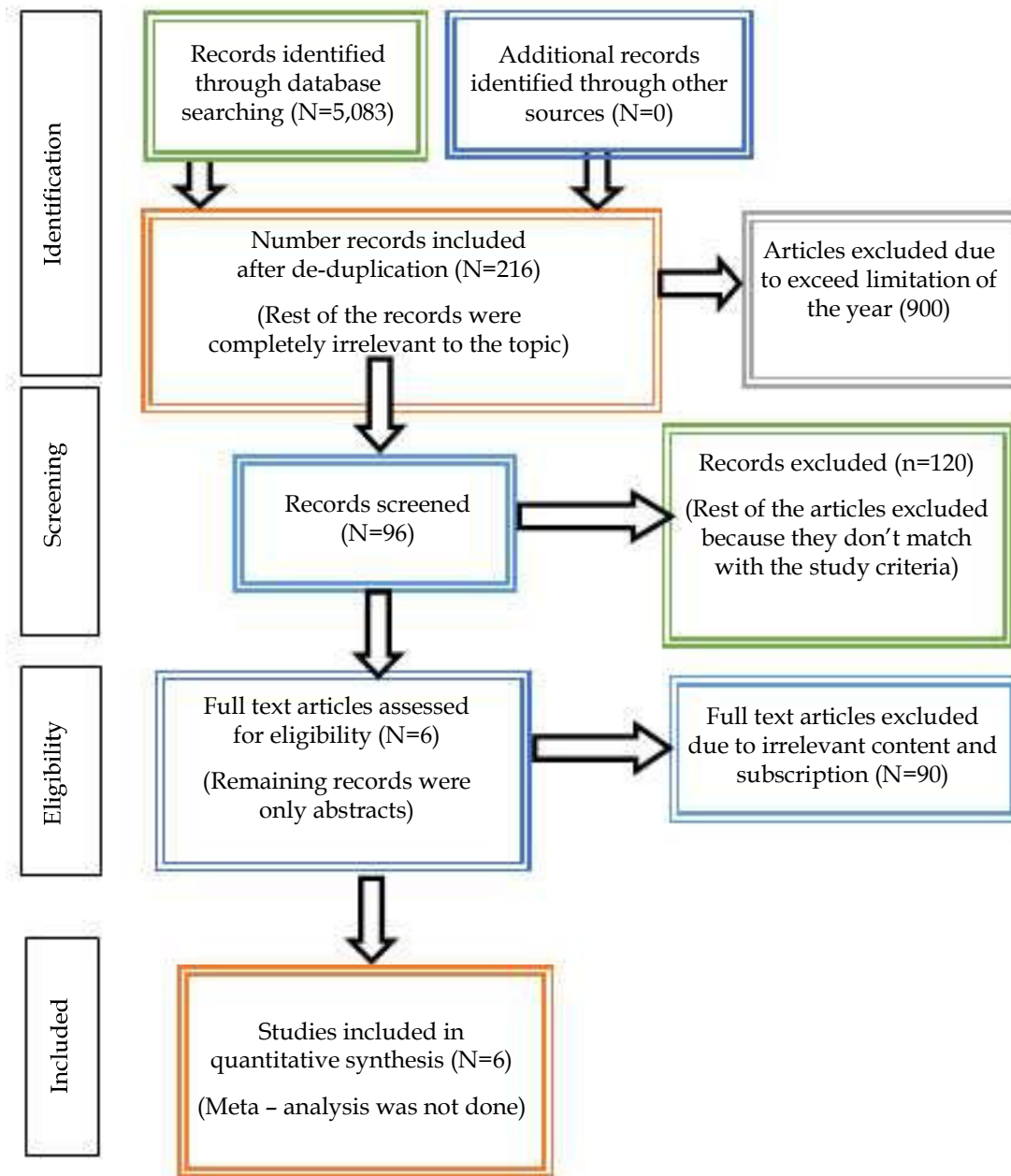


Fig. 1: Prisma flow diagram of narrative review

**Findings**

The systematic search was conducted by formulating the terms knowledge and practice of menstrual hygiene in relation to the integrative with all its synonyms, also according to the database. Likewise, a manual Research Gate and Google Scholar searches was done through Google search engine. An addition of 6 articles was found

in the database. Initial search recovers 5,083 articles over which 216 articles were selected manually. 120 articles were rejected as a result of replication in the database. Replication was removed and reviewed 96 articles for acceptability. 90 more studies were rejected because of unreachable of the full text. Hence 6 articles were screened which includes quantitative study.

## Discussion

These findings are supported by a study conducted by Sujirtha N., Kaluarachchi A., Vishnukumar S., 2017 as a cross sectional study. It was reported that the average level of menstrual hygiene practices was < 50% in 613 (80.6%) subjects, 50–75% in 148 (19.45%) and none practiced >75% of proper menstrual hygiene.

## Conclusion

There was an inadequate knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and poor practiced of menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls. So there is a need of proper training and health education (by family members, teachers, health educators and media) so that they can maintain good menstrual hygiene practice and there won't be any misconception regarding menstrual hygiene amongst the adolescent girls.

## Ethical Clearance

- Prior permission was obtained from the internal ethical committee of Sharda University.
- Informed written consent was taken from each participant under the study. Objective of the study was maintained with honesty, privacy confidentiality and anonymity.

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