

Knowledge And Attitude Of Saudi Students Regarding Menstruation

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Abstract: Understanding about facts regarding menstruation is definitely one of the most essential ones for girls. The aim of the study was undertaken to assess the knowledge and attitude of Saudi female students regarding menstruation in Hafer Al-Batin University. **Subjects and Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was adopted. The study was conducted on three colleges (Applied Medical Science College, Sciences, and Literature) in Hafer Al-Batin university. Sample consisted of 360 female students. **Tools of data collection:** Questionnaire consisted of three parts, first part involved demographic data, second part included knowledge and third part was consisted of many questions to assess the attitudes of female undergraduates' students towards menstrual cycle.

Key Words: Menstruation, Saudi students, attitude, knowledge.

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I. Introduction

Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood characterized by rapid physical, mental, and sexual development. Menstruation is a natural phenomenon and an important component of the active reproductive life of a woman which is an indicator of women's health, reflecting their endocrine function. It is the cyclic shedding of secretory endometrium under the control of hormones of the hypothalamo-pituitary axis, associated by blood loss. Its duration is 3-7 days, the inter-menstrual period ranges between 21-35 days with an average of 4 weeks and the average total blood loss ranges between 50-160 ml. Female's first menstruation is called menarche, its median age is 12.5 years and it is one of the indicators of maturity and can be used as a developmental landmark of a pubertal female (1).

The beginning of the menstrual cycle is unique event in in pubertal development of the adolescent femininity. Menstruation, and the menstrual cycle are characterized by variability in volume, pattern and regularity, which at the earlier stages of the development of the adolescent can create emotional discomfort particularly to the poorly informed girl (1). Many research studies have shown that although most girls viewed themselves as being prepared for menarche, and discussed this issue with their mothers. However, obvious misconceptions on the true physiological process and characteristics of menstruation and the menstrual cycle is reported in these studies. Moreover, many adolescent do not have the means for self-care and do not get the support they need when they face problems, which hinders their ability to carry on with everyday activities and may also establish a foundation for life-long disempowerment 2,3,4..

It was also noticed that many girls have a faulty knowledge of the location and function of the reproductive organs and their inter-relationships, to the extent that some of them even perceiving events like menstrual bleeding to be emanating from the abdomen, intestines, and kidneys, or occurring as a consequence of curse from god, sin, and disease 1,2. Meanwhile, adolescent females are undergoing a lot of physical as well as psychological stress due to the changes taking place in the body [4]. But most of the school going and pre-university girls are not aware of the fundamental facts about menstruation and puberty and very little attention is paid to the reproductive health of those girls [5].

Menstruation has often been dealt with secrecy in many cultures [6]. In social contexts where these issues are not openly discussed or where there is stigma and/or taboos surrounding menstruation, girls may have very little understanding of what is happening to them and their bodies. A lack of adequate sanitary materials and private facilities makes it even more difficult for girls to have positive attitudes towards their bodies [7]. Furthermore, social prohibitions and negative attitude of parents in discussing the related issues openly has blocked the access of adolescent girls to right kind of information.

Adolescent females need to have educational sessions about the changes occurring to their bodies as well as inclusion of their mothers in this process so that mothers can provide healthy advice to their daughters about menstruation [8]. In general, parents and teachers are health educators regarding reproductive health issues for

girls in order to improve their health attitudes and practices so they must focus on reproductive health issues including menstruation in the formal youth education.

Menstruation-related hygienic practices are heavily influenced by cultural, religious and social factors [9]. Different myths and taboos related to some menstruation practices were reported in the literature such as; avoiding touching water, avoiding looking in the mirrors, not combing hair, avoiding eating certain types of food or avoiding cooking during menstruation [10]. In many cultures, issues of menstruation are a taboo that should not be discussed openly and were regarded as strictly personal affairs.[1,2] In some settings, it was regarded as normal traumatic events that adolescent girls should pass through.

In a Jordanian study, the results indicated that 82.4% of responders lacked knowledge of pre-menarche menstruation and this contributed to unhealthy practices during menstruation. Also, according to Egyptian study 85% of girls had satisfactory knowledge about menstruation [12]. Adolescent females in university may have their own attitude toward menstrual cycle, this attitude may be affected by cultural perspective, lack of knowledge, and embarrassment to speak about this normal phenomenon with their mothers at home or others. To enable the incorporation of correct and appropriate information on menstruation and menstrual practices into the reproductive health education programs of schools in Saudi Arabia, it is important to determine their perceptions on, medical problems associated with and key practices during, menstruation with a view to identifying information gaps, attitude and misconception on menstruation requiring address.

Aim: The aim of this study was to assess menstrual knowledge and attitude of Saudi students, in Hafer Al-Batin University, KSA.

Research Questions:

- 1- What are the levels of Saudi students' knowledge about menstruation?
- 2- What are the attitudes of Saudi students toward menstruation?
- 3- Is there is a relationship between attitude and knowledge among Saudi students?

II. Subjects And Methods

Research Design: A descriptive cross-sectional design was utilized in this study .

Setting: The study was conducted on three colleges (Applied Medical Sciences , Sciences, and Literature) in Hafer Al-Batin university

Sample: 360 female students registered in the academic year 2017-2018 were included in the study as a sample. These students represent the adolescents Saudi girls from Eastern province.

Data collection instrument was done through the use of the electronic structures questionnaires, which include; the socio-demographic characteristics, source of information, preparedness and menstruation health profile and menstruation Attitude Questionnaire (MAQ) was also assessed. The content validity of the tool was achieved by reviewing it from 3 experts in obstetrics and gynecological nursing

Pilot study:

A pilot study was carried out before the implementation of the study on 10.0% of the sample for two times with interval of two weeks to assess the clarity of tools and test –retest reliability. These were not included in the main study sample.

Statistical analysis:

The data will be coded and analyzed using SPSS version 22 for suitable statistical analysis.

III. Results

Table (1) Distribution of the studied students according to socio-demographic characteristics (n = 360)

Data	No	%
Age:		
▪ <18	20	5.6
▪ 18-20	111	30.8
▪ 21-23	117	32.5
▪ >23	112	31.1
Education level:		
▪ Illiterate	0	0
▪ primary education	0	0
▪ Secondary education	71	19.7
▪ University education	289	80.3
Residence:		
▪ Rural	38	10.6
▪ Urban	322	89.4
Marital status		
▪ Single	219	60.8
▪ Married	141	39.2
Income status:		

▪ Enough	183	50,8
▪ Not enough	88	24,5
▪ Enough and can be saved from it	89	24,7
Mother level of education		
▪ Illiterate/Primary	247	68.6
▪ Secondary	97	26.9
▪ University	16	4.5

The socio-demographic characteristics of students in the study sample (Table 1) revealed that their age ranged between 18 and 23 years. More than half (63.3%) of them had university education and the majority were from urban area (89,4%), with more than half of them single and had enough income (60.8%, 50,8% respectively).

Table (2) Distribution of the studied students according to their menstrual history

Date	No	%
Age of menarche:		
▪ 9-<11 years	49	13.6
▪ 11-<13 years	151	41.9
▪ 13-<15 years	129	35.8
▪ 15-17 years	31	8.6
Rhythm of menstruation:		
▪ Regular	240	66.7
▪ Irregular	120	33.3
Duration of menstruation:		
▪ 2-3 days	11	3.1
▪ 4-5 days	122	33.9
▪ 6-7 days	209	58.1
▪ More than	18	5.0
Interval of menstruation (days):		
▪ <25 days	92	25.6
▪ 25 days	105	29.2
▪ 28 days	123	34.2
▪ >35 days	40	11.1
Number of pads/day:		
▪ < 3pads	84	23.3
▪ > 3pads	276	76.7
Normal menstruation at lasts for:		
▪ <3 days	5	1.4
▪ 3-7	332	92.2
▪ More than 7	6	1.7
▪ Don't know	17	4.7

Table (3) Distribution of the studied students according to their knowledge about menstrual cycle.

Data	NO.	%
Definition of menstrual cycle		
▪ Don't know	0	0.0
▪ Right uncompleted answer	183	50.9
▪ Right complete answer	177	49.1
Causes of menstrual cycle		
▪ Don't know/wrong answer	71	19.7
▪ Right uncompleted answer	231	64.1
▪ Right complete answer	58	16.2
Phases of menstrual cycle		
▪ Don't know	0	0.0
▪ Right uncompleted answer	343	95.3
▪ Right complete answer	17	4.7
Premenstrual syndrome		
▪ Pain and abdominal colic	40	11,1
▪ Headache	0	0,0
▪ Backache	13	3,6
▪ Mood change	10	2,8
▪ Breast tenderness	3	0,8
▪ More than one symptom	294	81,7
Menstrual disorders:		
▪ Don't know	241	66.9
▪ Right uncompleted answer	8	2.3
▪ Right complete answer	111	30.8
types of delayed menstruation ?		
▪ Don't know	354	<u>98.33</u>
	2	<u>0.55</u>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Right uncompleted answer ▪ Right complete answer 	4	1.11
What is causes of delayed menstruation ?		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know ▪ Right uncompleted answer. ▪ Right complete answer 	359 1 0	99.7 0.3 0.0
Importance of personal hygiene during menstruation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know ▪ Right uncompleted answer. ▪ Right complete answer 	0 185 175	0.0 51.4 48.6

Table (3) SHOW the Distribution of the studied students' knowledge about menstrual cycle. The current study was conducted to provide baseline data on the knowledge, attitude and practice of Saudi female nursing students toward menstruation. Near half of the sample (49.1%) of students completely recognize what did the term menstruation refer to, only 19.7% participant students don't know the causes of menstruation correctly.

Table (4) Distribution of the studied students according to their knowledge regarding menstrual cycle.

Data	NO.	%
Normal menarche should be start at:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know/wrong answer ▪ right answer 	12 348	3.3 96.7
Normal duration of menstruation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know/wrong answer ▪ right answer 	6 354	1.6 98.4
Regular menstruation repeated each days :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know/wrong answer ▪ right answer 	23 337	6.4 93.6
Normal pads number		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know/wrong answer ▪ right answer 	17 343	4.7 95.3
Irregular menstruation may due to organic disease :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No ▪ Yes 	211 149	58.6 41.4
What are the ways to relieve menstrual pain:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ exercises ▪ Medication ▪ Herbs ▪ Alternative methods 	22 59 237 42	6.1 16.4 65.8 11.7
Is menstruation associated with :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wight gain ▪ Wight loss ▪ Menstruation has no relation with Wight ▪ I don't know 	41 11 214 94	11.4 3.1 59.4 26.1
Do thyroid disorders cause problems with menstruation:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know ▪ No ▪ Yes 	12 175 173	3.3 84.6 84.1
Menstrual disturbance have relation with abnormal hair growth		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Don't know ▪ No ▪ Yes 	113 163 84	31.3 45.2 23.5
source of student's preparedness before menstruation :		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Family ▪ Book and journal ▪ Media ▪ School 	167 55 68 21 49	46.4 15.3 18.9 5.8 13.6

Data	Not Response		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
prepare yourself before menstruation:	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	274	76.2	86	23.8
ways to preparation for menstruation :	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	307	85.3	53	14.7
▪ Hot drinks	0	0.0	37	10.2	84	23.3	152	42.3	87	24.2
▪ Warm bath	0	0.0	69	19.2	102	28.3	150	41.7	39	10.9
▪ exercises	0	0.0	93	25.8	171	47.5	86	23.9	10	2.8
Lower back massage	0	0.0	109	30.2	167	46.4	50	13.8	34	9.4
Lower back& Lower Abdomen worm compress	0	0.0	28	7.8	43	12.0	99	27.5	190	52.7
Antispasmodics intake	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	193	53.6	167	46.4
Take snakes	0	0.0	0	0.0	83	23.0	200	55.6	77	21.4
Eat lose vegetables & fruits	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	241	67.0	119	33
Frequently Prenial Care	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	298	82.8	62	17.2
Frequently Change Prenial Pads	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0				

Table (5) Distribution of the studied students according to their healthy physical and psychological attitudes regarding menstrual cycle.

Table (6) Distribution of the studied students according to their unhealthy physical and psychological attitudes regarding menstrual cycle.

	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Avoid taking shower	0	0.0	123	34.1	122	33.8	31	8.6	84	23.3
Avoid social situation	6	1.7	87	24.2	102	28.3	99	27.5	66	18.3
Be isolated	0	0.0	204	56.7	134	37.2	18	5.0	4	1.1
Limit going to college	0	0.0	93	25.8	200	55.6	28	7.8	39	10.9
Limit daily activities	0	0.0	10	2.7	13	3.6	151	41.9	186	51.6
Don't cooking	0	0.0	38	10.5	114	31.7	112	31.1	96	26.7
Stop religion's activities	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	360	100
Avoid walking in green areas	0	0.0	13	3.6	18	5.0	205	57.0	124	34.4
Avoid walking without shoos or head cover	7	1.9	59	16.3	63	17.5	135	37.6	96	26.7

Table (7) Distribution of the studied students according to their barriers to seeking counseling and services regarding menstrual cycle.

Data	Not Response		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Financial barriers	0	0.0	332	92.2	24	6.6	4	1.1	0	0.0
Don't need this services now	0	0.0	0	0.0	54	15.0	182	50.5	124	34.4
unknown by places	0	0.0	38	10.5	114	31.7	112	31.1	96	26.7
Unknown by importance of this services	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	211	58.5	149	40.5
Conflict with study time	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	290	80.6	70	19.4
Shortage of medical staff knowledge	0	0.0	0	0.0	13	3.6	18	5.0	205	57.0
Fear of disclosure of my information and medical secrets	0	0.0	204	56.7	134	37.2	18	5.0	4	1.1
Family refuse search about this services	0	0.0	0	0.0	123	34.1	122	33.8	31	8.6
Shame of tell family.	0	0.0	93	25.8	200	55.6	28	7.8	39	10.9
Difficult to reach places of this services	0	0.0	10	2.7	13	3.6	151	41.9	186	51.6
Undesired to get this service	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	290	80.6	70	19.4

IV. Discussion

The results will be discussed and interpret under the light of other studies. The current study was conducted to provide baseline data on the knowledge, attitude and practice of Saudi female nursing students toward menstruation. Near half of the sample of students completely recognize what did the term menstruation refer to, only 19.7% participant students don't know the causes of menstruation correctly. In this study the Saudi females like other adolescents girls often lack knowledge regarding reproductive health, including menstrual hygiene, which can be due to socio-cultural barriers and restrictions in which they grow up, as few studies conducted in Saudi show (Najwa Karout * 2015).

Despite the number of the studies conducted about menstrual- action among adolescents, in Middle East and especially in Saudi Arabia, the need for highlighting this subject is an essential and necessary requirement. Majority of the girls in Saudi Arabia lack scientific knowledge about menstruation and puberty. Adolescent girls are often reluctant to discuss this topic with their parents and often hesitate to seek help regarding their menstrual problems [8]

Abeer Eswi*2012 mention in her study which conducted in Egyptian female adolescents have knowledge and attitude that is quite different than other societies and countries, this may be attributed by cultural differences. Egyptian female adolescents were influenced by their mothers, as they were the main source of information, followed by mass media, this may consequently affected their knowledge and attitude toward menstruation. knowledge that preceded menstruation is one of the important factors that affected Egyptian female adolescent's attitude toward menstruation [12]

(Pokhrel S*2014) the findings led to the conclusion that the students have deficient knowledge, various misconceptions and inadequate practices regarding menstruation and its management in pretest. However the knowledge and practices were significantly improved in posttest. This clearly points out that health education is improving their knowledge and practices. Taking into account the health implications and prevailing socio-cultural and economic factors. [13]

the higher proportion of the control group's girls received advice. Regarding menstruation from their mothers together with their low Knowledge score among them, shows that the mothers of these girls were lacking of right knowledge and the same thing was transferred to their offspring^[14] (Jarrahss*2012) in a Jordanian study the results indicated that 82.4% of responders lacked knowledge of premenarchial menstruation and this contributed to unhealthy practices during menstruation.^[15]

V. Recommendation

Based on the study findings, the following were recommended:

1. Providing female adolescents with the proper knowledge related to the physical and psychological aspects of menstruation before menarche age.
2. Mass media should have an active role in raising the awareness of adolescent's flames about menstruation and avoid reproductive health problems

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