

Menarcheal Age and Problems Related to Menstruation among School Going Adolescent Girls of Porbandar City

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ABSTRACT

Menarche is an unforgettable and remarkable event in any girl's life. Menstrual problems are very common among school going adolescent girls. The purpose of this research is to study the menarcheal age and problems related to it among school going adolescent girls of Porbandar city. A cross-sectional was carried out in Schools of Porbandar city. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the girls. A total of 182 girls aged between 9-16 years of age were selected for this study. A well formulated questionnaire was used as research tool to collect data. The mean age at menarche was 12.43. Maximum number of girls had their first menarcheal experience at the age of around 12-14 years of age. Maximum number of girls irrespective of their first menarcheal age experienced both abdominal and back pain. The irregularity of menstrual cycle was more among the menarcheal age 12-14 years of age that is 60.2% followed by 58.3% of girls belonging to 9-11 years of menarcheal age. Maximum percentage of 36.1% of girls belonging to 9-11 years of menarcheal age suffered from bleeding that lasted for more than five days. From the results it is very clear that most of the girls face menstrual problems so it is very much important to impart knowledge and awareness among girls to overcome menstrual difficulties. Inclusion of health education as a subject in academic curriculum of students can be very much helpful to them to overcome menstrual difficulties.

Key Words : Menarche, Adolescent, Porbandar city

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is an unforgettable and remarkable event in any girls' life. Adolescent is the stage between childhood and adulthood. During this stage of life adolescents are neither an adult nor a child. Both Physical and Mental development are maximum at this stage of life. Adolescents need a special attention during this period of life because of lot of challenges they face both emotionally and physically. Thus, UNICEF and UNFPA joined World Health Organization (WHO) and delivered a joint declaration on reproductive health of adolescents in 1989 to report to their problems.

The transition of childhood to sexual maturity can be full of anxiety, fear for the early adolescent. The beginning of menstruation is normally met with a multiplicity of responses. Varied feelings, such as being

“happy but frightened” and “content and uncomfortable,” are common. The initial period of menstruation is almost met with a variety of responses. Menstruating girls may experience some kind of physical, familial and social changes. During the first few years of menstrual bleeding it is normal that most of the girls experience irregular menstrual, other menstrual signs and symptoms such as white discharge, irritability, abdominal pain, excessive flow of blood, back ache, mood swings and inadequate intake of food may indicate a condition which requires rapid consideration and recommendations. Hence health care professionals play an important role in dealing with these adolescent girls. It is also very important that mothers should also take participation in counselling sessions of their daughters to overcome menstrual irregularities or any other problems related to it. There are so many causes for early menarcheal age. Some are obesity during

childhood, increased protein intake, Dietary causes and contact to endocrine disrupting chemicals

The present study was undertaken to study the menarcheal age and menarcheal problems among school adolescent girls of Porbandar district.

METHODOLOGY

Before conducting the research study permission from the District Educational Officer was obtained and also the permission of Principal was also obtained from the respective schools. For conducting this study, schools catering to female students were selected by stratified random sampling method by distributing the Porbandar district into definite zones on the geographical lay out, to confirm the study to be symbolic of the whole district. It is a cross –sectional study in nature. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the girls. The research study was conducted from December 2017 to January 2018. Girls aged between 11 to 16 years who had undergone menarche have been selected. Girls selected for the study were directly contacted through schools. An optimum sample size of 182 girls of Porbandar city was selected for the study. The research was designed in such a way that girls belonging to all socio economic classes were included. Modulated questionnaire was used as a research tool to get required information Questionnaire was developed after reviewing literatures. The questionnaire included details like current age, menarcheal age and problems related to menstruation. As the selected age group has high vulnerability to poor nutritional status there is a need to pay attention towards it. The data obtained were entered in Excel sheet and coding was done wherever required. The data obtained were entered in Microsoft Office Excel and analyzed with SPSS Version 20.

Exclusion criteria:

Girls who have not yet attend menarche and girls

having diseases such as hormone-related disorders, diabetes, skeletal, neurologic and muscular disorders, and chronic diseases such as asthma, were excluded. Girls studying in hostel were also excluded from the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 represents the menarcheal age of school going adolescent girls. The mean menarcheal age is 12.43. From the above table it is crystal clear that maximum number of girls had their first menarcheal experience at the age of around 12-14 years of age. Minimum percentage of girls that is only 5.50% experienced first menarcheal age around 15-16 years of age.

Menarcheal age	No. of Girls	Percentage
9 – 11	36	19.78%
12 – 14	136	74.72%
15 – 16	10	5.50%
Total	182	100%

According to the results of the Table 2 maximum number of girls had experienced abdominal pain irrespective of their first menarcheal age. Highest percentage of girls belonging to menarcheal age 15-16 years experienced both abdominal and back pain. 25% to 30% of surveyed girls did not experience any of the above said symptoms.

From the Table 3 the irregularity of menstrual cycle was more among the menarcheal age 12-14 years of age that is 60.2% followed by 58.3% of girls belonging to 9-11 years of menarcheal age. In the third category of menarcheal age that is 15-16 years equal percentage of 50% was noticed between girls experiencing menstrual irregularities and girls having regular menstrual cycle. Agarwal and Agarwal (2008) in his study observed that 48.4% of girls were experiencing irregular menstrual cycle which is close to our findings.

Menarcheal age	No. of Girls	Abdominal Pain	Back Pain	Both Abdominal and Back Pain	None
9-11	36 (19.78%)	16 (44.4%)	5 (13.8%)	5 (13.8%)	10 (27.7%)
12-14	136 (74.72%)	60 (44.1%)	26 (19.1%)	16 (11.7%)	34 (25%)
15-16	10 (5.50%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	1 (10%)	3 (30%)

Table 3 : Classification of girls according to menstrual irregularities

Menarcheal Age	No. of Girls	Yes	No
9 – 11	36(19.78%)	21(58.3%)	15(41.6%)
12 – 14	136(74.72%)	82(60.2%)	54(39.7%)
15 – 16	10(5.50%)	5(50%)	5(50%)
Total	182		

It could be seen from the Table 4 that comparatively maximum percentage of girls has their menstrual flow below five days. Maximum percentage of 36.1% of girls belonging to 9-11 years of menarcheal age suffered from bleeding that lasted for more than five days. The variations in results may be due to unequal distribution of girls among the three menarcheal categories. In a research conducted by Kartiga *et al.* (2011) found more than 60% of girls had their periods from 1 to 5 days and almost similar findings were observed in our study.

Table 4 : Classification of girls according to their length of menstrual flow

Menarcheal Age	No. of girls	≤5 Day	>5 Day
9 – 11	36 (19.78%)	23(63.8%)	13(36.1%)
12 – 14	136 (74.72%)	100(73.5%)	36(26.47%)
15 – 16	10 (5.50%)	9(90%)	1(10%)
Total	182		

Researcher tried to study the menarcheal age and menarcheal problems in school going adolescent girls of Porbandar district. The researcher reached at conclusion that there is need to bring awareness about the menarcheal issues. The problems can be reduced by true knowledge of the girls at threats. These responsibilities could be better handled by teachers, parents and health workers. To reduce the premenstrual symptoms and problems related to menarcheal right information on menstruation is necessary to girls. Decrease in the menarcheal has ended young girls to the possibilities of unpredicted and unintended sexual abuse, unprotected sexual activity, earlier accidental pregnancy, illegal abortions, and sexually transmitted diseases. There is an absence of mindfulness and sympathetic among adolescents concerning sexual growth and behaviour; furthermore, they may not be expressively fully fledged enough to take the apt decision. So, they have to be reassured that these physical mental and emotional changes are a normal process of development.

Health education should be done mandatory in school curriculum. Imparting awareness and knowledge about menstruation is very important which in turn may reduce the health risks and help in the proper management of menstrual activities. The Menstrual problems are very common among school going girls which may affect their school attendance and academic performances. For managing the menstrual activities properly it is necessary that teachers, students, and of course parents should join their hands and help in proper implementation of health and reproductive activities.

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