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Knowledge and practices of menstrual hygiene in adolescent school girls of urban and rural schools of Gadag district

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Abstract

Background: Menstruation is generally considered unclean in the Indian society though its a physiological process indicating beginning of reproductive life. Several prohibitions and the negative attitude of parents in discussing the related issues openly have blocked the access of adolescent girls to the right kind of information. Various studies indicate that a huge information gap exists among rural and urban adolescent girls regarding menstrual hygiene. The data about the level of knowledge and practices which are followed by them with respect to menses are beneficial in planning a program for improving the awareness level with respect to their quality of life

Materials and Methods: A community based cross sectional study was conducted from July 2018 to September 2018 on 708 school going adolescent girls of Gadag district, Karnataka. Girls between age group 11 to 18 years were included. Data was collected by a predesigned, pretested questionnaire

Result: Awareness of menstruation was only among 12.07% of rural school girls and 38.09% among urban school girls. The first source of information regarding menstruation was mother in 80% and only 17% from friends in both urban and rural girls. 18% of urban school girls always missed school and 35% of urban girls missed sometimes. Only 5.39% girls in rural areas always missed and 15.57% in rural areas missed sometimes. 76.22% girls from rural schools used sanitary pads and 68.31% of girls used in urban schools. Around 50% of girls both in rural as well as urban schools changed their pads twice a day. It was found that among the urban school girls 70.45 % of them disposed the sanitary pads by wrapping it in a paper, 10.82% flushed it in the toilets. In the rural schools, surprisingly 71.53% of them buried the sanitary pads, 7.56% flushed it and only 20.83% of them wrapped it in a paper. 40.93% of urban girls and 34.52% of rural school girls still practiced in the social taboos like diet restrictions, not attending religious functions or places of workshop.

Conclusion: There a need for adequate information both in rural and urban school girls. The knowledge about hygienic practices is lacking. There is also a need to address social taboos in both the groups. There is a need to emphasise on significance and physiological implications of menstruation

Author Keywords

Menstruation, Awareness, Sanitary pads, Menstrual hygiene, Social taboos

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