

To Assess the Knowledge Regarding Reproductive Hygiene Among Teenage Girls in Rural areas of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract: This research paper explores the knowledge and practices related to reproductive hygiene among teenage girls in the rural area of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. Through a cross-sectional study involving 102 participants, the findings reveal a concerning lack of awareness and inadequate practices among teenage girls regarding menstrual hygiene management. The study highlights the prevalence of incorrect beliefs, poor hygiene practices, and limited access to menstrual hygiene products among the participants. These findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive education, access to affordable hygiene products, and community-based initiatives to promote better reproductive hygiene practices among teenage girls in Shimla. Addressing these challenges is crucial to improving the physical health, emotional well-being, and overall empowerment of young girls in the region.

Keywords: Knowledge, Reproductive Hygiene, Teenage, Rural area

Introduction: Reproductive health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as whole well-being in behavioural, emotional, physical, and social aspects of reproduction. For a group or civilization to remain healthy, reproductive hygiene is necessary. Adolescence is the time of development and sexual maturation. Therefore, you must continue to practice good hygiene at this stage. Keeping oneself and the community clean is crucial to overall health, the several methods one might employ in adolescence to maintain a clean reproductive system. A balanced diet is essential for individuals of all ages. Given that nutrition has an impact on growth, teenagers should consume a well-balanced diet. A well-balanced diet has sufficient amounts of all the different types of nutrients, including proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals such as meat, eggs, milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and roti. These days, teens are big fans of fast food, junk food, and other items. Consuming fast food often has been connected to several diseases, including vitamin deficiency problems and obesity. Additionally, it has been demonstrated to have detrimental physical and psychological consequences on reproductive health. Exercise, proper sleep patterns, and personal hygiene are all components of reproductive hygiene. Adolescence is the start of puberty, and several puberty changes occur throughout this phase. Sweating increases because sweat gland activity is greater

during this period. In addition, it is exacerbated by the pubic and underarm hair development. As a result, maintaining cleanliness requires doing laundry, ironing, and regular bathing as well as adequate hand cleaning. Maintaining good physical and mental health is essential for the proper functioning of the reproductive organs in humans, and this requires practising reproductive hygiene. All phases of reproduction can happen safely and finally result in the birth of new progeny or a whole new creature when reproductive hygiene is upheld. The reproductive system is one of the most fragile in the human body, and it must be well-maintained to protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and the suffering associated with numerous reproductive issues. Furthermore, it's crucial to have healthy adolescent females.

Review of literature: -

Sanobar Fazal Shah, et. al, (2023) To evaluate the research topics, a descriptive cross-sectional approach was employed. A total of 300 female participants, aged 13 to 22, were selected from rural parts of Gilgit, Pakistan, using the sequential sampling approach. The data were gathered using a pre-tested questionnaire, and SPSS version 21.0 was utilised for analysis. The study discovered that over half of the participants had unfavourable views towards menstruation hygiene in addition to low levels of knowledge and practice. According to the study's findings, the participants had little awareness about menstruation hygiene.

Suresh Kotwal, et al, (2022) Adolescent females enrolled in schools in the Doda region of Jammu and Kashmir territories, India, were the subjects of this cross-sectional study. A pre-structured semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data through interviews, and MS Excel was used to analyse the findings. Participants in this study, who were 14–16 years old, were 450 teenage females from public and private schools in the Doda area of Jammu and Kashmir. The majority of participants took daily baths during their menses, and 42% of them missed school during that time. Menstrual hygiene and menstruation awareness need to be promoted, with a focus on giving teenage girls enough knowledge on the subject. The two groups' reproductive hygiene habits were contrasted. The majority of girls in cities utilise sanitary pads (65%) and dustbins for their disposal (85%) as compared to rural girls who are still using cloth (53.4%) and use wasteland for their disposal (44.8%). In the current scenario, India has a population of over 1 billion and adolescent comprises 22% (225 million) of the population, of which 47% are females.

Research Methodology:

Objective: To assess the knowledge regarding reproductive hygiene among teenage girls in rural areas of Shimla Himachal Pradesh.

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference regarding the knowledge of reproductive hygiene among teenage girls.

H1: There is a significant difference regarding the knowledge of reproductive hygiene among teenage girls.

Operational definition:

Reproductive hygiene is defined as a complete set of physical, mental, and social well-being and simply an absence of disease in an individual capable of reproducing.

Research approach: - Quantitative research approach

Sample size: -The 102 teenage girls selected at a government school in Rampur (H.P).

Sample technique: A convenient sampling technique.

Development of tool: Structured knowledge questionnaires consisting of 15 multiple-choice questions were developed and utilised for the data collection.

Data Analysis:

The demographic information gathered from 102 representatives is displayed in Table 1. 13.7% of the teenage girls belonged to the 13–14 age group. 15–16-year-olds contributed 28.4%, followed by 17–18-year-olds at 30.4% and 19-year-olds at 28.4%. Of the 102 teenage girls, 35 come from joint families and 67 are from nuclear families. These adolescent girls' mothers had received primary (17.64%), secondary (65.6%), and graduate (16.6%) education. In contrast, the data collected indicates that the father's educational background is 10.7% primary, 33.3% secondary, 53.9% graduate, and 1.9% professional.

	<i>PARTICULARS</i>	<i>FREQUENCIES</i>	<i>PERCENTAGE</i>
<i>Age</i>	13-14 years	13	12.7%
	15-16 years	29	28.4%
	17-18 years	31	30.4%
	19 years	29	28.4%
<i>Type of family</i>	Joint	35	34.3%
	Nuclear	67	65.7%
<i>Mother Education</i>	Primary	18	17.64%
	Secondary	67	65.6%
	Graduate	17	16.6%
	Professional	0	0%

Father Education	Primary	11	10.7%
	Secondary	34	33.3%
	Graduate	55	53.9%
	Professional	2	1.9%

Table 1 Demographic Variable

What do you use as your menstrual hygiene product during your period
102 responses

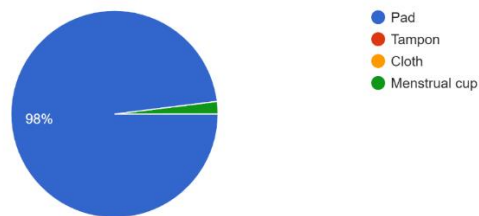


Figure 1: Menstrual Hygiene Product

In Figure 1 The majority of the representative data use pads as menstrual hygiene products which is 98%.

How often should you change your menstrual hygiene product during your period
102 responses

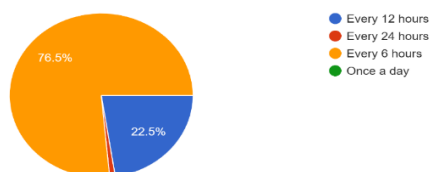


Figure 2: Change of menstrual hygiene products

Figure 2 represents Menstrual hygiene product changes that occur every six hours for 76.5% of respondents, according to representative statistics, and every twelve hours for around 22.5% of respondents.

What is the purpose of wearing breathable underwear
102 responses

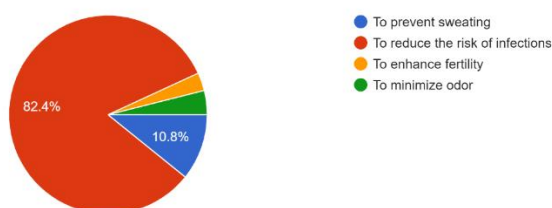


Figure 3: Purpose of wearing breathable underwear

Based on the information gathered in Figure 3, 82.4 per cent of these adolescent girls knew that wearing breathable pants lowers the risk of infections, while 10.8 per cent thought it was just to stop them from sweating.

What is a common symptom of a yeast infection
102 responses

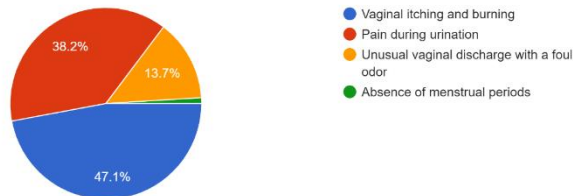


Figure 4: Common symptoms of a yeast infection

Figure 4 represents Participants' understanding of the typical symptoms of a yeast infection ranging from burning and itching in the vagina (47.1%) to pain during urination (37.2%) and atypical vaginal discharge with bad odour (13.7%).

Which of following can help prevent urinary tract infections
102 responses

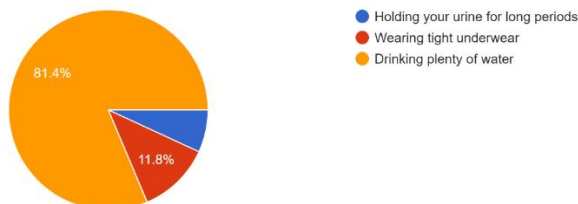


Figure 5: Prevent urinary tract infections

In Figure 5 The majority of the representative data to prevent urinary tract infections is drinking plenty of water (81.4%), and around 11.2%wearing tight underwear.

How can you maintain proper hygiene during menstruation when using public Toilets
102 responses

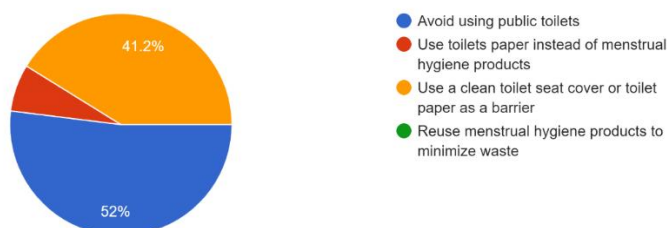


Figure 6: Maintain proper hygiene during menstruation when using public Toilets

Figure 6 shows the knowledge among teenage girls regarding maintaining proper hygiene during menstruation when using public toilets 52% believed is better to avoid its use whereas 41.2% use a clean toilet seat cover or toilet paper as a barrier.

Which of the following behaviors can contribute to maintaining good reproductive hygiene
102 responses

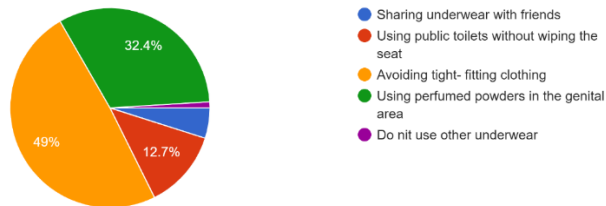


Figure 7: Good reproductive hygiene behaviours

The above figure 7 shows that 49% avoid tight-fitting clothes followed by 32.4% using perfumed powders in the genital area contributes to maintaining good reproductive hygiene among teenage girls.

How should you properly store and handle menstrual hygiene products
102 responses

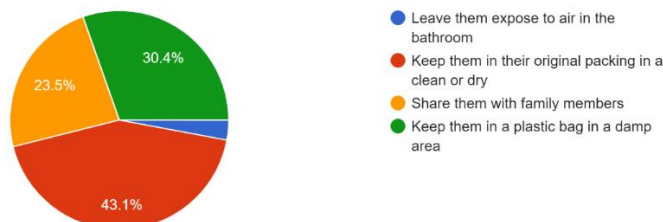


Figure 8: Store and handle menstrual hygiene products

Figure 8 shows the knowledge regarding the storing and handling of menstrual hygiene products to 43.1% of teenage girls keep them in their original packing in a clean and dry, 30.4% keep them in a plastic bag in a damp area and 23.5% share them with family members

How often should you replace your razor blade when shaving the genital area
102 responses

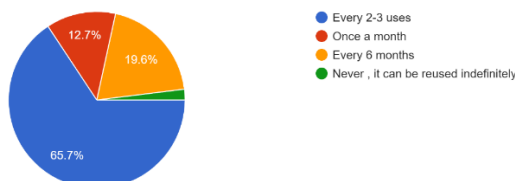


Figure 9: Replace of razor blade

According to the data collected in Figure 9, the majority of these teenage girls replace razor blades when shaving the genital area after every 2-3 uses i.e. 65.7%, every 6 months and once a month 19.6% and 12.7% respectively.

How can you prevent vaginal odor
102 responses

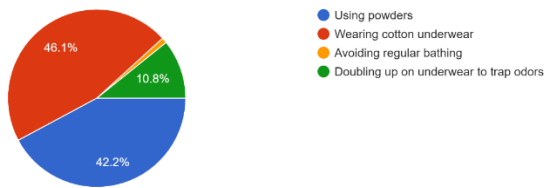


Figure 10: Prevent vaginal Odor

The above figure shows that the majority of teenage girls wear cotton underwear to prevent vaginal odour (46.1%), 42.2% use powder whereas 10.8% doubling up on underwear.

Which of the following is a potential consequence of poor reproductive hygiene practices
102 responses

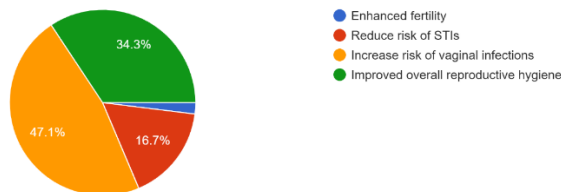


Figure 11: Consequence of Poor Reproductive Hygiene Practices

Figure 11 shows the knowledge regarding the consequences of poor reproductive hygiene practices among teenage girls i.e. 47.1% believe that it increases the risk of vaginal infection and 34.3% improved overall reproductive hygiene.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the study on knowledge regarding reproductive hygiene among teenage girls in rural areas of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh highlights the importance of proper menstrual hygiene practices for overall health and well-being. The findings indicate that while girls are aware of the need to use pads and change them regularly, there are still gaps in knowledge and practices that need to be addressed. Poor reproductive hygiene habits, such as using powders instead of proper hygiene products, can increase the risk of vaginal infections. Factors such as lack of education, shyness, and taboos around discussing reproductive hygiene contribute to these challenges. It is crucial to improve access to accurate information and education on reproductive hygiene to

empower teenage girls to make informed choices and maintain good hygiene practices. By promoting open communication, providing proper education, and addressing cultural taboos, we can help ensure the health and well-being of teenage girls in Shimla and beyond. In addition to the findings of the study, it is important to consider the broader implications of inadequate knowledge and practices regarding reproductive hygiene among teenage girls in Rural areas of Shimla, Himachal Pradesh. Poor menstrual hygiene can not only lead to physical health issues such as infections but can also have significant social and emotional consequences for young girls. The stigma surrounding menstruation and lack of access to proper hygiene products can contribute to feelings of shame, embarrassment, and low self-esteem among teenage girls. This can impact their overall well-being, confidence, and participation in daily activities, including school attendance and social interactions.

To address these challenges and promote better reproductive hygiene practices among teenage girls in Shimla, a multi-faceted approach is needed. First and foremost, there is a critical need for comprehensive and age-appropriate education on menstrual hygiene management in schools and communities. This education should cover topics such as proper hygiene practices, the importance of using sanitary pads, how to safely dispose of menstrual waste, and debunking myths and taboos surrounding menstruation.

Furthermore, efforts should be made to increase access to affordable and quality menstrual hygiene products for teenage girls in Shimla. This may involve working with local governments, NGOs, and private sector partners to distribute free or subsidized sanitary pads, as well as promoting the use of eco-friendly and reusable options for menstrual hygiene products. Providing access to clean and private sanitation facilities in schools and public spaces is also crucial to ensure that girls can manage their menstrual hygiene with dignity.

Additionally, promoting open dialogue and creating safe spaces for girls to discuss reproductive health and hygiene issues is essential. Community-based programs, peer education initiatives, and awareness campaigns can help break down communication barriers and empower girls to take charge of their health.

Overall, by addressing the knowledge gaps, cultural taboos, and access barriers related to reproductive hygiene among teenage girls in Shimla, we can support their physical health, emotional well-being, and overall empowerment. It is vital for stakeholders at all levels – including policymakers, educators, healthcare providers, parents, and community leaders – to work together to create a supportive environment where girls can thrive and maintain good reproductive hygiene practices.

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