

A study to assess the knowledge and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among Adolescent girls in selected Higher Secondary School in Churachandpur

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Abstract

Introduction: Menstrual hygiene, a very important risk factor for reproductive tract infection as well as mental health, is a vital aspect of health education for adolescent girls. Educational television programmes, trained school nurse/health personnel, motivate school teachers and knowledgeable parents can play a very important role in transmitting the vital message of correct menstrual hygiene to the adolescent girls of today. By teaching adolescent girls, we can provide how to handle their menstrual fluid, improve their knowledge of personal hygiene and boost their confidence.

“Menstrual hygiene materials are those used to catch menstrual flow, such as clothes, reusable and disposable

pads, menstrual cups and tampons”. Menstrual hygiene is an issue that begins with adolescence. The practice, knowledge and attitude which develops during adolescence, are usually followed by them throughout their life and also passed on to their next generation. Any faulty belief or practices pertaining to menstruation will affect the health of a large number of women in the reproductive age group.

Aims and objectives: “To assess the knowledge and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescence girls in selected Higher Secondary School in Churachandpur.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive research study was conducted in the selected Higher Secondary Schools

in Churachandpur, Manipur. Non-probability convenience sampling technique was used to select 564 adolescent girls studying in the selected Higher Secondary Schools in Churachandpur, Manipur. Data were collected using semi-structured self-administered knowledge and practices questionnaire during the month of September 2022. The tools used in the study were questionnaire on socio-demographic variables, semi-structured self-administered of knowledge and practices questionnaire on menstrual hygiene. The reliability of knowledge questionnaire tool was computed by using split half method and found 0.75. The data were analysed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result: The study results showed that out of 564 participants, majority i.e. 70.5% participants had moderate knowledge, 20% participants had adequate knowledge and only 9.5% participants had inadequate knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene. Chi-square test is applied to find out the association between knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene with selected demographic variables. The overall Chi-square value for age of adolescent girls, stream of education, mother's education level, age of menarche and monthly family income are 26.0374, 29.5195, 26.0195, 3467.7957 and 18.4138 respectively which are significant at 5% level of significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant association between knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and the above-mentioned socio-demographic variables among the adolescent girls. However, Chi-square value for level of education and religion scored 1.2711 and 7.1822 respectively which are not significant. Therefore, it can be concluded that the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene is independent on the above-mentioned socio-demographic variables. In other words, these factors cannot influence the findings of the present study.

Conclusion: The study findings have shown that among 564 adolescent girls, 70.% had moderate knowledge, 20% of them had adequate knowledge and 9.5% had inadequate knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene. This shows that the awareness regarding menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls is still inadequate. Therefore, Educational television programmes, trained school nurses / health personnels, motivated schoolteachers and knowledgeable parents play a very important role in transmitting and advocating the vital messages on correct menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls of today. By educating adolescent girls, there can be an enhancement in their knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene thus leading to positive menstrual hygiene practices.

Keywords: Knowledge, Practices, Menstrual hygiene, Adolescence girls.

Introduction

Menstruation is an exceptional phenomenon that nature has planned for women. It is not just a small term but a major stage where a woman undergoes certain reproductive changes from onset of menstruation (menarche) till menopause. The first menses is known as "menarche". The onset of menarche will begin between 9-16 years and termination will be between 45 - 50 years. It differs from person to person and by heredity, racial, background and nutrition. In most women, menstruation occurs approximately every 28 days and it lasts for 3-5 days and the amount of blood loss is estimated to be 20-80 ml with an average of 35 ml. Nearly, 70% of total menstrual blood loss occurs in the first two days [1].

Menstruation is surrounded by various psychological and religious barriers due to lack of knowledge about the scientific process of menstruation. Although menstruation is a natural process, it is linked with several perceptions and practices within the community which

sometimes may result in adverse health outcomes. It is an important issue concerning morbidity and mortality of the female population. Therefore, increasing knowledge about menstruation and menstrual hygiene right from childhood may escalate safe practices and may help in mitigating the suffering of millions of women. Menstrual hygiene management should be an imperative part of healthcare. The United Nation (2012) defines adequate menstrual hygiene management as “women and adolescent girls using a clean menstrual material to absorb all collect blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of the menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to facilities to dispose used menstrual management materials” [1].

The Government of India on 7th January 2014 launched the nation’s first comprehensive adolescent health programme named Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) in New Delhi to promote menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls between the age group of 10-19 years. Under this program adolescent Health components like Menstrual hygiene Scheme (Low cost sanitary napkin @Rs.6/- per pack to adolescent girls by ASHAs, Weekly Iron & Folic Acid Supplementation (WIFS) programme and counselling centers (Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics) were implemented. [2].

Menstrual Hygiene is an issue that begins with adolescence. The practices, knowledge and attitude which develops during adolescence are usually followed by them throughout their life and also passed on to their next generation. Therefore, any faulty belief or practices pertaining to menstruation will affect the health of a large number of women in the reproductive age group.[1]. Menstrual hygiene, a very important risk factor for reproductive tract infection as well as mental health, is a vital aspect of health education for adolescent girls.

Menstrual hygiene Management (MHM) is constrained by practical, social, economic and cultural factors such as the expense of commercial sanitary pads, lack of water and latrine facilities, lack of private rooms for changing sanitary pads and limited education about the facts of menstrual hygiene [3].

According to WHO 2015, Menstrual Health and Hygiene (MHM) is essential to the wellbeing and empowerment of women and adolescent girl. In India, according to the study of NCBI (2012), 31.27% of Urban girls and 71.42% of Rural girls reused pads during menstruation period and cleaning of external genitalia was satisfactory only in 131 (47.6%) of the urban and 101 (37.96%) of the rural girls [4].

According to the most recent National Family Health Survey (2020-21), more than 30 per cent of women between the ages of 15 and 24 do not use hygienic methods of protection during their menstrual period. Hygienic methods include “locally prepared napkins, sanitary napkins, tampons, and menstrual cups” [5].

Aims And Objectives

Primary Objectives

- To assess the knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.
- To assess the practice regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls.

Secondary Objective

- To find the association between knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene and selected socio-demographic variables.

Methodology

Study Design: A descriptive cross-sectional research design.

Setting: The study was conducted in Rayburn College, Churachandpur, Manipur.

Study population and study period: A total of 564 adolescent girls were selected in the study by adopting non-probability convenience sampling technique and data was collected from 1st to 30th September 2022.

Data retrieval and analysis: The data was retrieved for a one-month period in Rayburn College, Churachandpur, Manipur among 564 adolescent girls. The tools used for the study were socio-demographic data of the adolescent girls, semi-structured self-administered knowledge and

practices questionnaire and the tools were in English language. Consent form and assent form were taken from the adolescent girls. The data were grouped and analyzed according to the objectives and hypotheses of the study using descriptive and inferential statistics and were presented in the form of graphs, table and diagrams.

Results

Table 1: Level of frequency and percentage distribution of knowledge score regarding menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls N=564

Sl.no	Knowledge level	Range of score	Frequency (N=564)	Percentage (%)
1.	Adequate	15-21	113	20%
2.	Moderate	8-14	397	70.5%
3.	Inadequate	0-7	54	9.5%
Total			564	100%

Fig. 1: Bar diagram showing the different choices of absorbent materials preferred during menstruation among the adolescent girls N=564

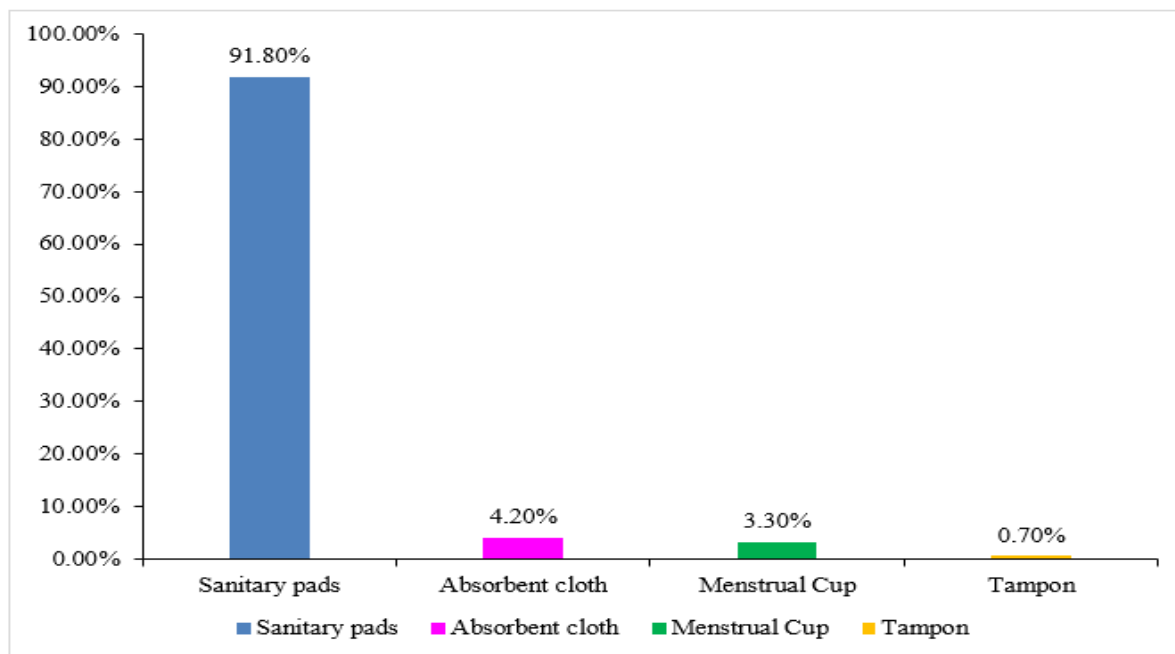


Fig. 2: Bar diagram showing the frequency of change of pads during menstruation among the adolescent girls

N=564

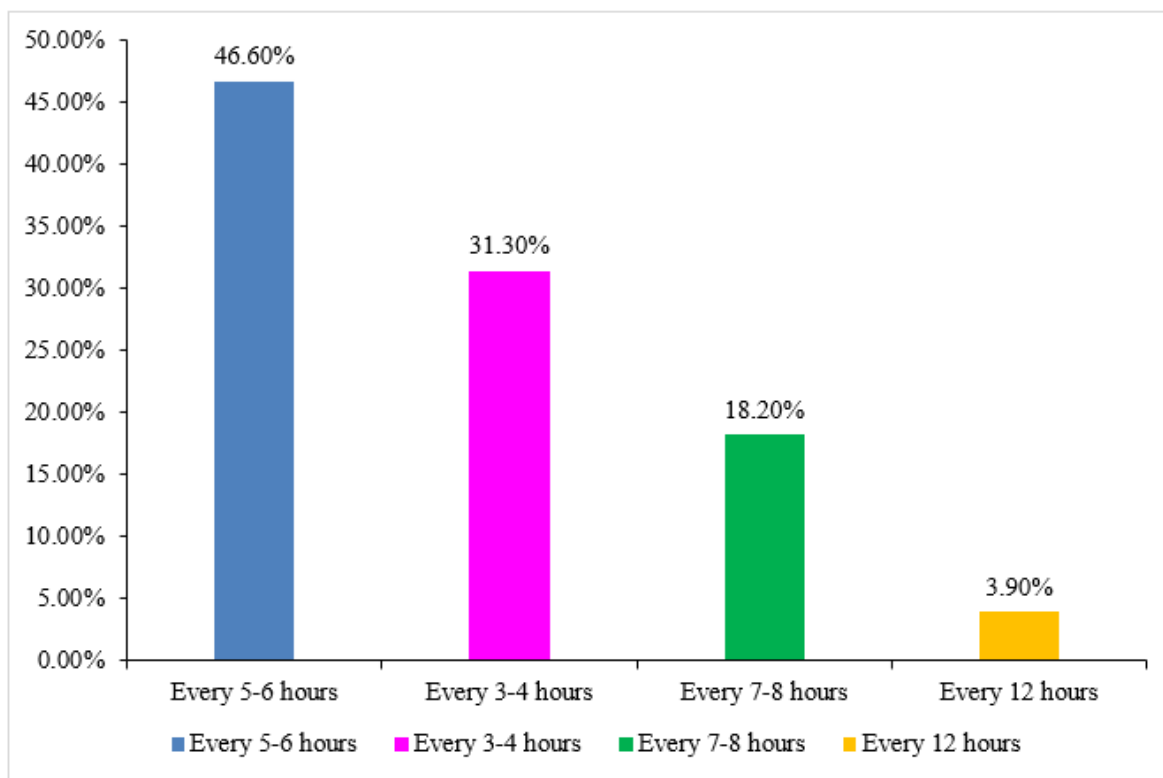


Fig. 3: Bar diagram showing the preferred places for changing pads during menstruation among the adolescent girls

N=564

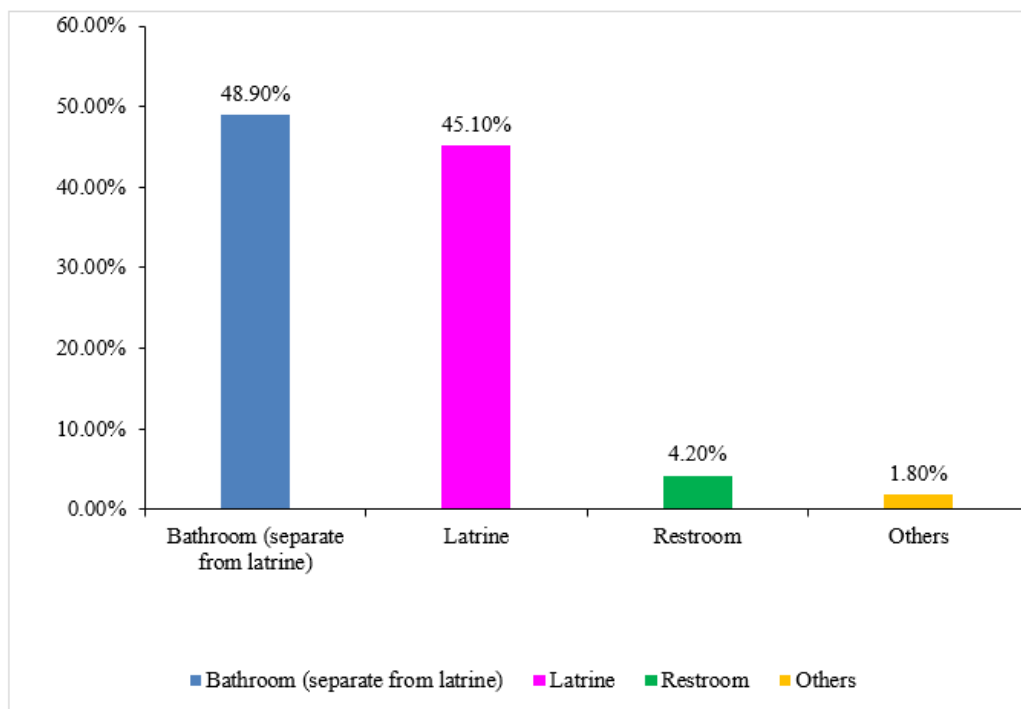


Fig. 4: Bar diagram showing the different choices of materials preferred to wrap/discard pad during menstruation among the adolescent girls N=564

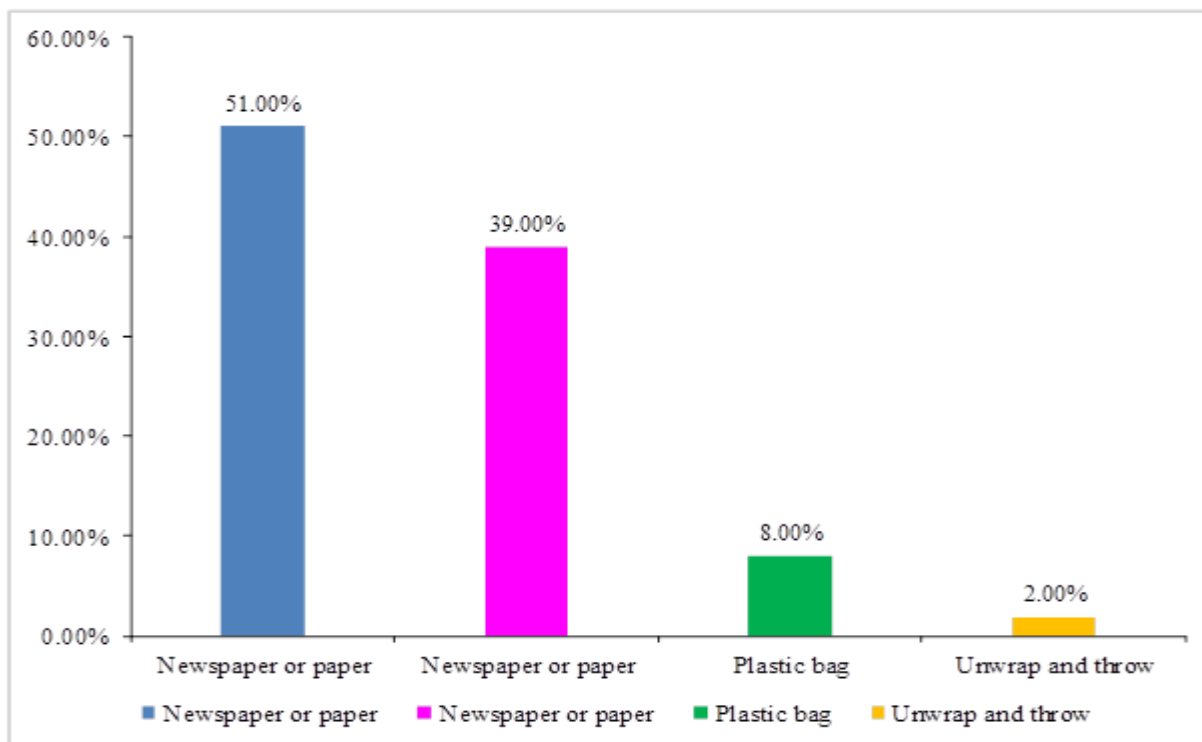


Fig. 5: Bar diagram showing the different places preferred for discarding used pad/cloth during menstruation among the adolescent N=564

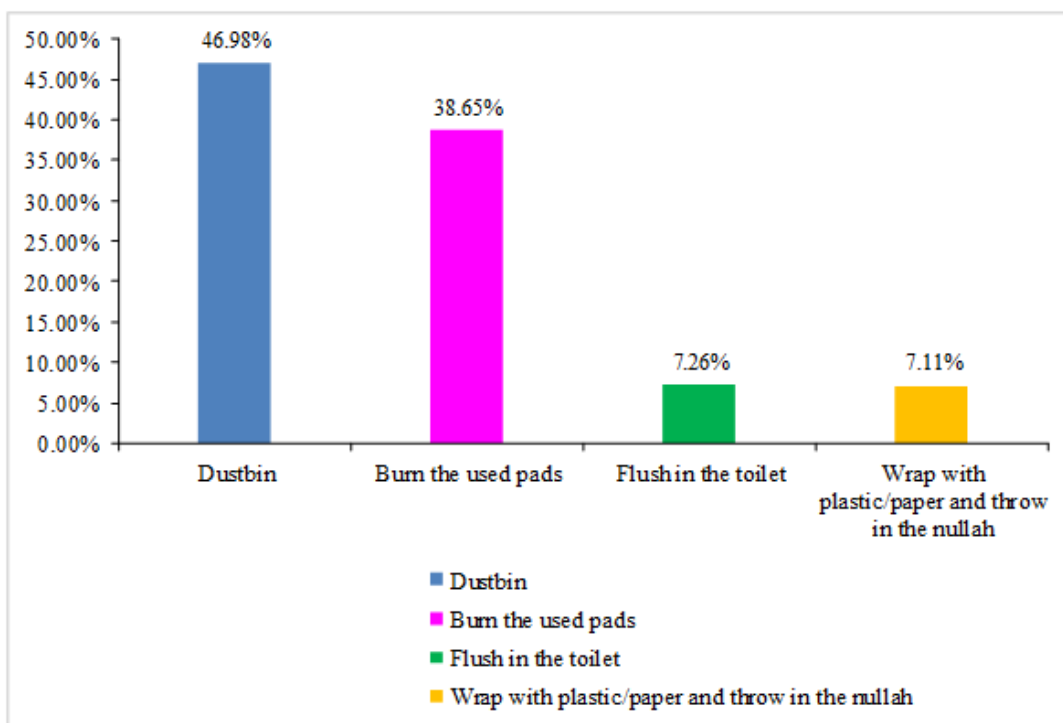


Fig. 6: Bar diagram showing the frequency of taking bath in a day during menstruation among the adolescent girls N=564

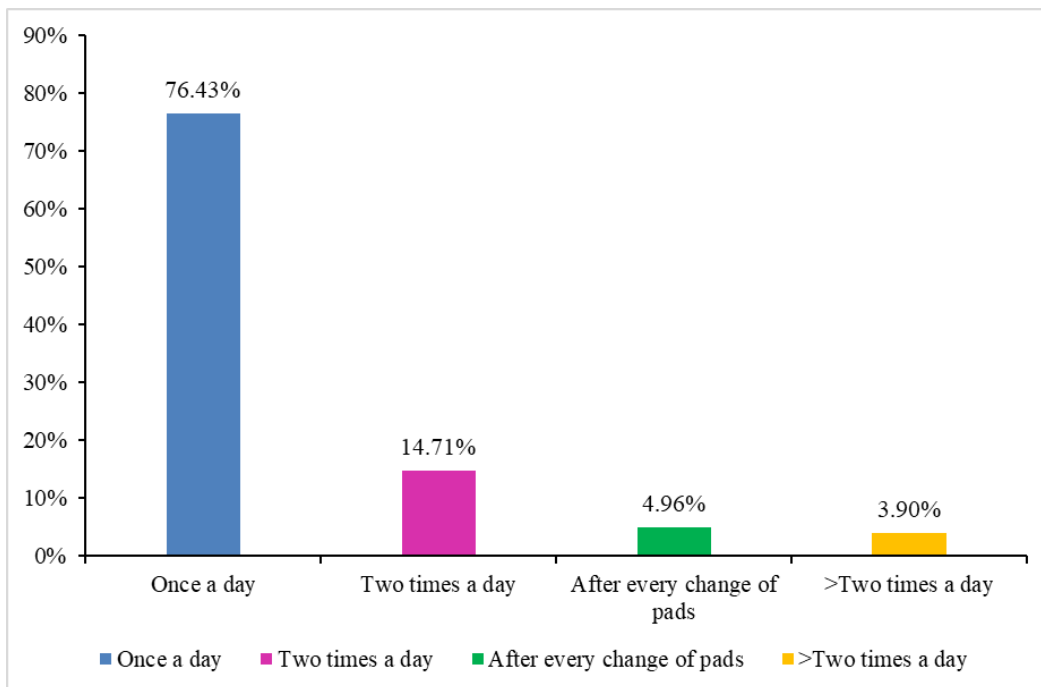


Fig. 7: Bar diagram showing the different methods used for cleaning panty/underwear during menstruation among the adolescent girls N=564

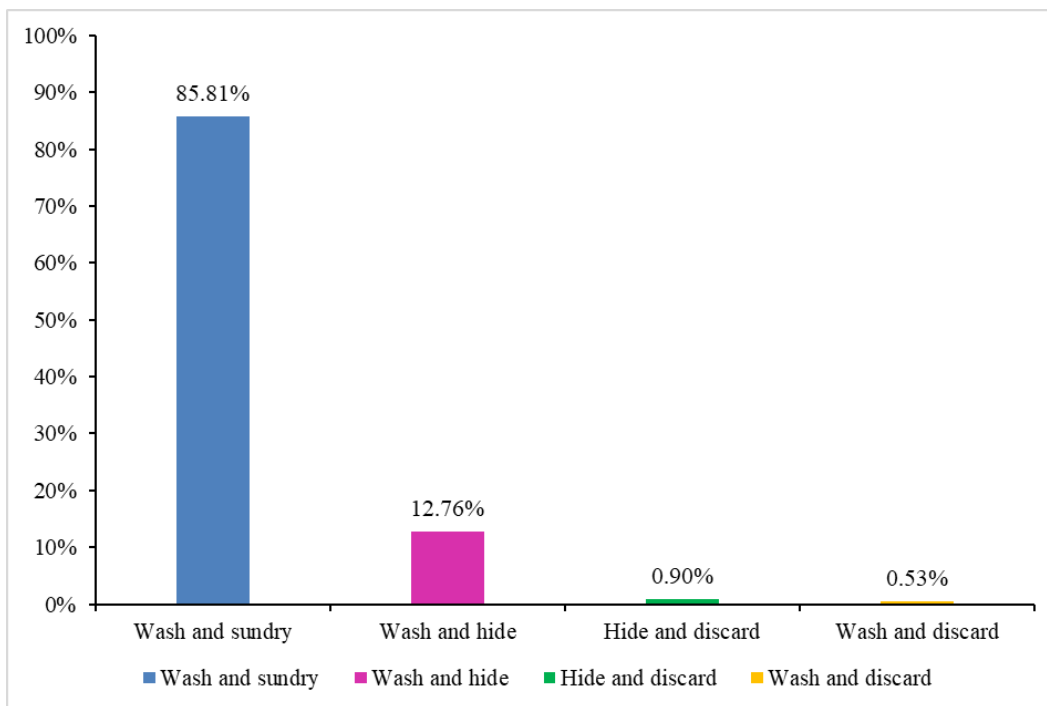


Table 2: Frequency and percentages distribution of Menstrual Hygiene practices of the adolescent girls

Variables	Frequency N=564	Percentage (%)
Sources of information regarding menstrual hygiene practices N=564		
Mother	400	70.92%
Sister	73	12.94%
Mass Media	45	7.98%
Healthcare Personnel	40	7.09%
Teacher	6	1.07%
Duration of menstruation		
>Four days	205	36.34%
Four days	216	38.31%
Three days	132	23.40%
Two days	11	1.95%
Methods used for cleaning external genitalia		
Wash with Soap and water	322	57.09%
Wash with intimate wash	101	17.90%
Wash with only water	84	14.89%
Wash with warm water and salt	57	10.12%
Frequency of washing genitalia during menstruation		
After every change of pads	268	47.52%
Two-three times per day	122	21.63%
Three- four times	89	15.78%
One – two times per day	85	15.07%
Methods for management of menstrual cramps		
No treatment taken	322	57.09%
Home remedies	159	28.19%
Prescribed medication	56	9.92%
Over the counter medications	27	4.78%
Practices done to reduce menstrual cramps to promote the flow of menstrual blood		
Light manual work	445	78.90%
Yoga	46	8.15%
Jogging	42	7.46%
Light cardio	31	5.49%
Food preferences during menstruation		
Fruits (Lemon, Mango)	266	47.16%

Green leafy vegetables	133	23.58%
Fish, red meat and chicken	87	15.43%
Eggs, milk and butter	78	13.83%
Amount of water consumed during menstruation		
2-4 glasses of water	331	58.69%
5-7 glasses of water	149	26.42%
>10 glasses of water	56	9.93%
8-10 glasses of water	28	4.96%
Activities avoided during menstruation		
Eating fruits	207	36.71%
Washing hair/bathing	165	29.25%
Working	62	10.99%
Lifting heavy weight	60	10.64%
Entering into kitchen	40	7.09%
Going Outdoor	30	5.32%

Table 3: Computation of Chi-square test to determine the association between knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene with selected socio-demographic variables N=564

		Frequency (N=564)			Total	Chi-square	P-value
Demographic variables	Category	Adequate Knowledge	Moderate Knowledge	Inadequate Knowledge			
Age of adolescent girls	15years	0	23	5	28	26.0374	15.51 *
	16 years	10	144	24	178		
	17years	30	180	28	238		
	18years	14	180	10	104		
	19years	3	13	0	16		
Level of Education	Class-XI	35	264	48	347	1.2711	5.99 NS
	Class-XII	23	171	23	217		
Stream of Education	Arts	43	249	26	318	29.5195	9.49 *
	Science	11	164	40	215		
	Commerce	2	29	0	31		
Religion	Hindu	2	5	2	9	7.1822	12.59 NS
	Muslim	0	1	0	1		
	Christian	51	437	64	552		

	Others	1	1	0	2		
Mother's Education Level	Post graduate	0	8	4	12	26.0195	18.31 *
	Graduate	2	34	7	43		
	Class-XII passed	5	40	6	51		
	Class-X passed	4	77	16	97		
	<Class-X	19	141	25	185		
	Illiterate	26	142	8	176		
Age of Menarche	10years	0	5	1	6	3467.7957	21.03 *
	11years	2	20	3	25		
	12years	15	110	22	147		
	13years	20	191	19	230		
	14years	13	92	15	120		
	15years	6	22	5	33		
Monthly Family Income	≤ Rs.10,000/month	30	184	18	232	18.4138	15.51 *
	10,001- 20,000/month	7	110	18	135		
	20,001- 30,000/month	5	76	14	95		
	30,001- 40,000/month	6	30	9	45		
	>40,000/month	8	39	10	57		

*Significant at 5% level (P-value<0.05)

NS: Not Significant

Discussion

The findings of the present study results were discussed in relation to the objectives of the study conducted and this was compared to the results of similar studies in the area of research. In this study the objectives were to assess the knowledge and practices regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls in selected higher secondary schools in Churachandpur, Manipur.

Findings related to demographic characteristics of the adolescent girls in selected Higher Secondary School.

The study showed that majority (41.8%) of the participants were at the age group of 17 years, 31% at the age group of 16 years, 17.9% at the age group of 18

years, 5.1% at the age group of 15 years and 4.1% at the age group of 19 years. On the contrary, in a study done by Hablegiory H et.al. (2021) the result shows that majority of the participants (55.4%) were at the age group of 16-19 years, 44.58% of the participants between 13-15 years [6].

About the educational qualification, the present study showed that maximum participants of adolescent girls (61.5%) were studying in class-XI while 38.4% of the participants were studying in Class-XII. This result is in contrast with the study done by Davis J et.al (2018). The result shows that majority of the participants (18.2%) educational qualification is Grade 12, 17.8% of the

participants in Grade 10 and 17.4% of the participants in Grade 11. Regarding stream of education, maximum participants of adolescent girls, i.e., arts stream (53.8%), 40.9% were in science stream and only 5.3% were in commerce stream. Regarding religion, in the present study 97.9% of the participants were Christian, 0.02% Hindu. On the contrary to this study, a study done by Wasan Y et.al (2022) showed that majority of the participants (90.59%) were from Muslim religion.

Regarding mother's education level, the present study majority of the mother's education level were below class-X (32.9%), 30.5% were illiterate, 15.7% were class-X passed, 9.6% of the mothers were class-XII passed, 9.2% of the mothers were graduate and 2.1% of the mothers were post graduate. This result is contrast with the study done by Mahajan A, Kaushal K (2022), where maximum of the mother's (41%) educational level is secondary level (class-XII).

Regarding the age at the time of menarche, the present study shows that majority of the adolescent girls had their menarche at the age of 13 years (37.8%), 30.5% at the age of 12 years, 20.7% at the age of 14 years, 5.2% at the age of 11 years, 4.7% at the age of 15 years and 1.1% had menarche at the age of 10 years. Similar findings were observed by Odey G O et.al (2021) that majority (29.7%) of the participants age of menarche is at age of 13 years. [7].

Regarding family income, the present study shows that majority of the adolescent (40.2%), 23.9% were monthly income of Rs. 10,001- 20,000, 16.4% were monthly income of the Rs. 20,001- 30,000, 10% were monthly income of >Rs, 40,000 and 9.2% were monthly income of Rs 30,000- 40,000. Similar findings was observed by Nahar N S (2019) that majority 71.7% of family's income is >15000 [8].

Findings related to knowledge regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene of the adolescent girls in selected Higher Secondary Schools.

The present study findings showed that 70.5% had moderate knowledge, 20% of the participants had adequate knowledge and 9.5% had inadequate knowledge regarding menstruation. In contrast to this study, in a study done by Habtegiorgis et.al the result shows that 76.5% had good knowledge regarding menstruation and 23.5% had poor knowledge regarding menstruation.

Findings related to menstrual hygiene practices of the adolescent girls in selected Higher Secondary Schools

In regard to the sources of information regarding menstrual hygiene practices among adolescent girls, 70.92% of the girls got their information from their mother, 12.94% got from their sisters, 7.98% from mass media, 7.09% from health care personnel and 1.07% girls from their teacher. Similarly, in the study done by Hema Priya S (2017) the result showed that majority 32.1% girls reported their mother to be the primary source of information [9].

In regarding the duration of menstruation in days among the adolescent girls 38.31% of the girls had their menstruation for four days, 36.36% for more than four days, 23.40% for three days and 1.95% for only two days. Similarly, in the study by Suman Gupta et.al (2021) the result shows that majority 54.8% had duration of menstrual flows of 3-5 days [10].

In regard to the different choices of absorbent materials preferred during menstruation among adolescent girls, majority 91.80% of the adolescent girls used sanitary pads, 4.20% girls used absorbent cloth, 3.30% girls used menstrual cup and 0.70% girls used tampon during menstruation. In contrary, a study done by Rakhish Datil et.al (2015) shows that all the participants used cloths during menstruation.

Regarding the frequency of changing pads during menstruation, majority (46.60%) of the adolescent girls change their sanitary pads every 5-6 hours, 31.30% every 3-4 hours, 8.20% every 7-8 hours and 3.90% every 12 hours. Similarly, in the study by S R Patil et.al (2017) majority (63.34%) changed their pad more than 3 times a day. Regarding the preferred places for changing pads during menstruation among the adolescent girls, 48.90% changed their pads in the bathroom, 45.10% in latrine, 4.20% in the restroom and 1.80% in other places. In contrary to this, a study done by Riddhi Patel (2015) shows that only 42.1% girls have toilet facilities at their home while 57.9% used common toilet.

Regarding the different choices of materials preferred to wrap/discard used pads, 51% of the adolescent girls used newspaper or paper to wrap their used pads during menstruation, 39% used both newspaper or paper bag, 8.00% used plastic bag and 2.00% girls preferred to unwrap and throw their used pads. Similarly, in the study done by S.R Patil et.al (2017), the result shows that sanitary pads were wrapped in paper and disposed by 51.67% of the girls [11].

In regard to the different places for discarding used pads/cloth, 46.98% of the adolescent girls used the dustbin, 38.65% girls burned the pads, 7.26% flushed in the toilet and 7.11% wrapped the pads with plastic or paper and throw it in the nullah/drainage. In contrary to the present study, a study done by Partha Nande et.al (2017) shows the result that majority 60.8% of the girls burnt or buried their used menstrual absorbent, 29.1% girls threw it in the dustbin, 4.2% girls were washing and reusing the cloth material whereas 6% girls disposed by flushing in the toilet [9].

In regard to the different method of cleaning the external genitalia during menstruation, majority of the adolescent girls, i.e. 57.09% cleaned their genitalia with soap and

water, 17.90% girls used intimate wash, 14.89% girls used only water and 10.12% girls used warm water and salt to clean their external genitalia during menstruation. Similar finding was observed by Bilkish N. P et.al (2014) that 65.68% of girls practice cleaning of genitalia, 24.09% girls used soap and water and 23.41% girls used water and antiseptic [12]. Regarding to the frequency of cleaning/washing the external genitalia during menstruation, majority of the adolescent girls (47.52%) washed their external genitalia after every changed of pads, 21.63% girls washed 2-3 times per day, 15.78% girls washed 3-4 times per day and 15.07% girls washed it once per day the result is in contrast with the study done by Sutanuka Santra (2017) the result shows that only 21.7% of the participants washed their genitalia >4 times a day. About the number of times the adolescent girls took bath during menstruation, majority (76.43%) of the girls took bath once a day, 14.71% took bath twice a day, 4.96% took bath after every change of pads and 3.90% took bath more than twice a day. In contrast to this study, a study done by Chet Kant Bhual (2020) shows that only 16.5% of the school girls took daily bath during menstruation [13].

Regarding the different method used for cleaning their underwear majority (85.81%) of the adolescent girls cleaned, washed and sun dried their underwear, 12.76% washed and hide, 0.90% hide and discard it and 0.53% washed and discard. In contrast to the present study, Bilkish Nabilal P et.al (2014) on their study shows that 44.23% girls dried cloth pieces inside the house [13].

Regarding the different method used for the management of menstrual cramps during menstruation, majority 57.09% of the adolescent girls took no treatment for their menstrual cramps, 28.19% took home remedies, 9.92% of girls took prescribed medication and 4.78% took over the counter medication for management of menstrual

cramps during their menstruation. In relation to this study, a study done by Ogeyi Goodness et.al (2022) shows that about 9% girls used OTC pain reliever, 12% girls used a heating pads and 10.4% girls exercises to alleviate the menstrual cramps. Regarding the different practices done to reduce menstrual cramps and promotion of menstrual flow during menstruation, majority (78.90%) of the adolescent girls did light manual work, 8.15% girls performed yoga, 7.46% girls jogged and 5.49% girls performed light cardio. Similarly in the study done by Maria Laura Parra-Fenandez (2020) 21.9% perform massages to relieve menstrual cramps during menstruation.

In regard to the different types of food preferences during menstruation, majority (47.16%) of the adolescent girls preferred fruits, 23.58% girls preferred green leafy vegetables, 15.43% girls preferred fish, red meat and chicken and 13.83% girls preferred eggs, milk and butter. In contrast to this study, in a study done by Kalpana Sharma et.al (2020), the result shows that 16.1% respondents avoided certain foods like dairy products, banana etc during menstruation. The different amount of water consumption during menstruation majority (58.69%) drink 2-4 glasses, 26.42% drink 5-7 glasses, 9.93% drink more than 10 glasses and 4.96% drink 8-10 glasses of water. In the contrary, a study done by Chet Kant Bhusal (2020) showed the result that 7.8% of the urban and 8.9% of the rural girls were not allowed to drink water during menstruation [13].

Regarding the different types of activities avoided during menstruation, majority (36.71%) of the adolescent girls avoided eating fruits, 29.25% avoided washing hair and bathing, 10.99% girls avoided working, 10.64% girls avoided lifting heavy objects, 7.09% girls avoided entering the kitchen and 5.32% girls avoided going outdoor during menstruation. Similarly, in the study done

by Rajashri G. Yaliwal et.al (2020) the result shows that 46.4% of the urban girls and 40.3% of the rural girls avoided cultural functions during menstruation.

Limitations: The study findings cannot be broadly generalized as the study sample was not large and was conducted only in selected Higher Secondary Schools in Churachandpur, Manipur.

Conclusion

The study findings have shown that among 564 adolescent girls, 70.5% had moderate knowledge, 20% of them had adequate knowledge and 9.5% had inadequate knowledge regarding menstruation. Regarding menstrual hygiene practices, the participants used different variety of absorbent materials, majority 91.80% of the adolescent girls used sanitary pads, 4.20% girls used absorbent cloth, 3.30% girls used menstrual cup and 0.70% girls used tampon during menstruation. The frequency of changing pads during menstruation, majority (46.60%) of the adolescent girls change their sanitary pads every 5-6 hours, 31.30% every 3-4 hours, 8.20% every 7-8 hours and 3.90% every 12 hours. In regard to the different method of cleaning the external genitalia during menstruation, majority of the adolescent girls, i.e. 57.09% cleaned their genitalia with soap and water, 17.90% girls used intimate wash, 14.89% girls used only water and 10.12% girls used warm water and salt to clean their external genitalia during menstruation. This shows that the adolescent girls had good menstrual hygiene practices but the awareness regarding menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls is still inadequate. Educational television programmes, trained school nurses/health personnels, motivated school teachers and knowledgeable parents can play a very important role in transmitting and advocating the vital messages on correct menstrual hygiene among the adolescent girls of today. By educating adolescent girls, there can be an

enhancement in their knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene thus leading to positive menstrual hygiene practices.

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