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Menstruation and its Related Problems among Adolescent Girls – A Sociological Study in Sangeethapatty Village Panchayat in Omalur Taluk of Salem District

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Abstract

Adolescence is an important period and during this period only almost all the boys and girls attain their puberty. Compare to boys' puberty the girls' puberty play a special attention in the society. Especially in Indian society a special family function has been arranged and in such function a special celebration has been conducted by inviting their kin and kith. Due to influence of the modernization and westernization, the individuals are attracted with junk foods and in some of the individual's life the junk foods become the part and parcel. The consumption of the junk foods also attracted the adolescent boys and girls. The present paper aims to understand the menstruation and its related problems among the adolescent girls in Sangeethapatty village panchayat in Omalur Taluk. For the purpose of the study 32 adolescent girls selected in the study area and by using interview schedule the required data collected from the respondents. The results indicate that the respondents who have the habit of the consumption of junk foods have the history of early menarche, painful periods, heavy periods and irregular periods.

Keywords: Adolescent Girls, Menstruation and Junk Foods

Introduction

The adolescent period is very important period in human life like other periods. This period is also a transitional period between the childhood and the adulthood and this period is serving as a passage for every adolescent person to enter the adulthood period very safely. This period is also called as teen age period and this adolescent period starts from 10 to 19 years of every individual. Adolescents are those between the ages of 10 and 19 years (World Health Organization, 1995). Adolescence is that the most vulnerable period within the human life cycle after puberty, marked by rapid development and growth with a transition from infancy to maturity. The teenage term is taken from the Latin word 'adolescence,' aiming to mature into adulthood (ICDS, 2012).

During this period every individual is experienced with lot of physical, psychological, biological and emotional development and this period is also marked with biological maturity of the every individual. Adolescence is a period when physical growth and maturation are accompanied by mental and psychological development (Sadhna and Achala, 2006).

One of the biological maturities is the onset of menarche for girls and nocturnal emission for boys. The menarche of the girls as well as nocturnal emission of the boys enables them to participate in the family life. But these onset of biological maturities not confirmed them to get marry because after the onset of biological maturity both boys and girls have to wait for certain years for the ensure of the full development to participate in the family life and here full development means the girls and boys mature fully with regard to physically, physiologically and psychologically. For ensuring the physical, physiological and psychological maturity the government of every country enacted the law the minimum age for both boys and girls to get marry. According to law in India, the minimum age for girls to get marry after completion of 18 years and for boys to get marry after completion of 21 years.

Compare to the boys biological maturity, the girls biological maturity is recognized as a special period in a girl's life cycle which requires special attention. Menarche is an important biological milestone in a woman's life as it marks the onset of the reproductive phase of her life. The average age at menarche is mostly consistent across the populations, which is, between 12 and 13 years of age. Menstruation is regulated by hormones; in this process, endometrial, lining of uterus gradually thickens and sheds off and causes bleeding that normally last for 3–5 days and occasionally up to 7 days. Menstruation sheds two-thirds of the endometrial lining. In addition to blood, menstrual fluid contains mucus and vaginal secretions. The menstrual flow varies from female to female and may be more or less at the beginning of menses or may change throughout the cycle. During the menstrual cycle, the girls are facing so many problems and the major menstrual related problems as follows:

- Painful periods (dysmenorrheal)
- Heavy periods (menorrhagia)
- Irregular periods (oligomenorrhea)
- Absent periods (amenorrhea)

Rafiquend Al-Sheikh (2018) and Beevi et al. (2017) revealed that the menstrual irregularities are the common problems faced by girls during their period. Due to the adaptation of new life style, menstrual

irregularities are very common in adolescent girls. Menstrual disorders are the difficulties which interfere normal menstrual cycle of an adolescent girls they involve painful menstruation, absence of bleeding or heavy bleeding. There are various menstrual disorders that are differing in signs and symptoms. There are so many factors which cause menstrual irregularities like hormonal influences, lack of exercises, thyroid problems, and food habits. Gagua et al. (2012) and Sheteet al. (2015) mentioned that the menstrual disorders are leading causes of academic and work absenteeism among young females resulting in greater loss of income and decreased quality of life. Despite their high prevalence and the associated ill effects, many female are reluctant to use medical care for these conditions.

Lee et al. (2006) mentioned that menstrual disorders are a common presentation by late adolescence; 75% of girls experience some problems associated with menstruation including delayed, irregular, painful, and heavy menstrual bleeding, which are the leading reasons for the physician office visits by adolescents. Menstrual patterns are also influenced by a number of host and environmental factors (Rowland et al., 2002). However, few studies in India have described the lifestyle factors associated with various menstrual cycle patterns. The current changes in the age of menarche in India adolescents and historically, the age at menarche has gradually decreased by about 4 months in every 10-year interval (Lee et al., 2011). Fox (2004) and Good enough (1998) indicated that some of these menstrual characteristics, such as irregularity in the menstrual cycle, premenstrual pain and discomfort, pain and discomfort at the time of menstrual discharge, and a heavy menstrual discharge, may affect the general and/or reproductive health of a woman. A study conducted by John in Kerala 2010 showed that 70.1% of adolescent girls had a menstrual problem. Menstrual disorders are common in adolescence and can have significant consequences on future reproductive health. Dysmenorrhea, premenstrual syndrome, and menstrual hygiene are leading contributors to the burden of disease borne by adolescent girls (Sharma and Gupta, 2010).

Patil et al. (2018) mentioned that poor menstrual hygiene practices in terms of using unhygienic absorbent materials, poor hand washing practices were highly prevalent in India. The awareness about menstruation before menarche ranges from 39–70% across various districts of Tamil Nadu (Barathalakshmi et al. 2014; Jothy and Kaliselvi, 2012; Devi et al. 2016; Iswarya, 2018; Priya et al. 2017). Awareness of menstruation before menarche is important because the reaction toward menarche is based on this. Most of the time the adolescent girls feel scared on first menstruation or disgusted or indifferent or uncomfortable or any other feelings (Parameaswari, 2014; Seenivasan, 2016). The present study is an attempt to understand the menstruation related problems among the adolescent girls in Sangeethapatti Village Panchayat of Omalur Taluk in Salem District of Tamil Nadu.

Materials and Methods

The universe of this study is adolescent girls who are living at Sangeethapatti Village Panchayat of Omalur Taluk in Salem district. The Sangeethapatti Village Panchayat in one of the Village Panchayats in Omalur Taluk. It is surrounded by Mattukaranpudur Village Panchayat in the North, Kottagoundampatty Village Panchayat in the South and West, Karuppur Twon Panchayat in East. The researchers have collected the data from the respondents those who are in the adolescent age group from 10 years to 19 years. There are 32 respondents have been contacted and these respondents chosen through purposive sampling method. In the present study, the information has been collected from 32 adolescent female's respondents by using the interview schedule method. The information in the interview schedule includes aspects such as socio-economic characteristics, consumption of junk foods and menstruation related problem. The consumption of junk foods were measured with whether the respondents consume the snacks like cake, chips, chocolates, soft drinks, biscuits, oil food from hotel, parota and the like on every day. The menstruation and its related problems have been measured with age at the initiation of menstruation, whether the respondents have irregular periods, painful periods, heavy periods and illness experienced during the

period. The collected data analysed with simple frequency table with percentile score.

Results and Discussion

Out of the 32 respondents, 25 per cent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 10- 13 years, 43.75 per cent of the respondents are belonging to the age group of 14- 16 years and remaining 31.25 per cent of the respondents are belong to the age group of 17-19 years. The structure indicates that more than two-fifth of them (43.75 %) are in the age group of 14-16 years. Similarly 25 per cent of the respondents are studying 5th to 8th standard, 43.75 per cent of the respondents are studying 9th to 11th standard and 31.25 per cent of the respondents are studying 12th to UG level. The educational level reveals that more than two-fifth of the respondents (43.75 %) are studying 9th to 11th standard. The age and education level of the respondents shows that all respondents are pursuing the education on par with their age without any lapse.

The nature of the family of the respondents is concerned, 56.25 per cent of the respondents are living in nuclear family and remaining 43.75 per cent of the respondents are living in joint family. As sizeable percentages of the respondents are living in nuclear family in a rural area like Sangeethapatti, it is clear that there is a change in tradition due to influence of modernity and contact with outsiders. When the respondents are asked to respond whether they would to do any house hold work during their free time, 81.25 per cent of the respondents are able to find free time to do the house hold work and the remaining 18.75 per cent of the respondents are not able to find free time to do the house hold work.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents based on the Age of Menarche

Age of Menarche	No. of respondents	%
10 Years	02	06.25
11 Years	09	28.13
12 Years	14	43.75
13 Years	07	21.87
Total	32	100

The above table shows that 43.75 per cent of the respondents attained their menarche at the age of 12

years, 28.13 per cent of the respondents attained at the age of 11 years, 21.87 per cent of the attained at the age of 13 years and remaining 6.25 per cent of the respondents attained their menarche at the age of 10 years. From the above table, recent years the girl children began to attain their menarche even at the age of 10 years and it may be due to the adaptation of the new food culture that is including the consumption of the junk foods along with other biological reasons.

Table 2 Distribution of Respondents based on the Consumption of Junk Foods

Consumption of Junk Foods	No. of respondents	Percentage
Daily	25	78.15
Not Daily	07	21.85
Total	32	100

The above table indicates that 68.75 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they consume junk foods like cake, chips, chocolates, soft drinks, biscuits, oil food from hotel, parota and the like on everyday basis and remaining 31.25 per cent of the respondents revealed that they never consume the mentioned junk foods on everyday but now and then these respondents consume the junk foods.

Table 3 Distribution of Respondents based on the Age of Menarche and Consumption of Junk Foods

Age of Menarche	Consumption of Junk Foods	
	Daily	Not Daily
10 Years	02	-
11 Years	08	01
12 Years	12	02
13 Years	03	04
Total	25	07

The above table shows that the respondents who attained menarche at their age of 10 years all of them consumed junk foods every day, 88.89 per cent of the respondents who attained menarche at their age of 11 years mentioned that they consumed junk food every day, 85.71 per cent of the respondents who attained

puberty at their age of 12 years revealed that they consumed junk food every day, 42.85 per cent of the respondents who attained menarche at their age of 13 years said that they consumed junk food every day. From the above interpretation it may be concluded that those who have consumed junk foods every day and they attained puberty at an early age than those who have not consumed junk foods every day.

As far as the normal menses period is concerned, the girl must have three days period and the same was asked among the respondents and they replied that 31.25 per cent of them are having three days periods, 56.25 per cent of the respondents have five days periods, remaining 12.5 per cent of the respondents have seven days periods. With regard to regular menses period it must consist of 28 days and with ranges from 21 days to 35 days and apart from these days be considered as irregular periods. Similarly the respondents are also asked to respond whether they have regular or irregular periods, 68.75 per cent of the respondents are having regular periods and remaining 31.25 per cent of the respondents are having irregular periods. Likewise the respondents are also asked about to reveal whether they have normal menstrual bleeding or heavy menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia) and among the total 32 respondents 56.25 per cent of the respondents have heavy periods and remaining 43.75 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they don't have heavy periods.

Table 4 Distribution of Respondents based on Having Heavy Periods and Consumption of Junk Foods

Having Heavy Periods	Consumption of Junk Foods	
	Daily	Not Daily
Yes	16	02
No	09	05
Total	25	07

In the present study there is an attempt made to study whether the consumption of junk foods have any influence on heavy periods, out of 18 respondents who mentioned that they have heavy periods 16 respondents (88.89 %) consume junk foods on every day and out of 25 respondents who consume junk

foods on every day 16 respondents (64 %) reported that they have periods. It may be conclude from the above findings that the consumption of junk food has influence the heavy periods. Along with heavy periods, the respondents also asked about whether they have any painful periods, 78.12 per cent of the respondents have painful periods and remaining 21.88 per cent of the respondents don't have painful periods.

In the present study there is also an attempt has been made to find whether there is any influence between consumption of junk foods and painful periods. Out of 25 respondents who have mentioned painful period, 23 of them (92 %) are consuming junk foods on every day. From this cross table, it may be concluded that the consumption of junk foods one of the reasons for the pain menstrual periods.

Table 5 Distribution of Respondents based on Having Painful Periods and Consumption of Junk Foods

Having Painful Periods	Consumption of Junk Foods	
	Daily	Not Daily
Yes	23	02
No	02	05
Total	25	07

With regard to period symptoms, 78.125 per cent of the respondents are suffering from symptomatic abdominal pain, 3.125 per cent of the respondents are suffering from symptoms of dizziness and remaining 18.75 per cent of the respondents are suffering from symptoms of tired.

Conclusion

The present study aims to understand the menstruation related problems among the adolescent girls in Sangeethapatty Village Panchayat in Omalur Taluk in Salem District. For this purpose 32 respondents have been selected with the help of purposive sample and the required data have been obtained from the respondents with help of interview schedule. The results show that out of total 32 respondents two respondents attained their menarche at the age of ten and the mean age of the menarche

workout to 12.53 years with a standard deviation of 1.47. The seven hamlets of the Sangeethapatty village panchayat are located near to the Salem Corporation limits and that the process of urbanization as well as the process of modernization influences the food pattern of the respondents. In order to understand the influence of junk foods on the menarche and how the consumption of junk foods have make on impacts on the painful periods, heavy periods and irregular periods. The cross tabulation between the consumption of junk foods and age at attainment of the menarche shows that the respondents who are consuming the junk foods on every day attained the menarche at an early age than the respondents who are not consuming the junk foods on every day. The earlier studies mentioned that an early menarcheal age is associated with increased risk for breast cancer, obesity, endometrial cancer, and uterine leiomyomata (van Lenthe, 1996; McPherson, 1996). Similarly the cross tabulations are also prepared to understand the influence of the consumption of junk foods on the painful periods, heavy periods and irregular periods and the cross tabulation indicates that the respondents who are consuming the junk foods on every day having painful periods, heavy periods and irregular periods. Shende et al. (2017) found that fast food/ junk food have high fat, sodium and saturated fat content making it unsuitable for health. It also increases the menstruation related problems, such as early menarche, irregular, heavy and excessive menses etc. Therefore the parents must advise their wards not to consume the junk foods as well as not to pay any amount for paying the junk foods. Similarly the parents and children must know the side effects of the consumption of the junk foods and the side effects must communicate them through appropriate medium. Likewise some portion in the science subject of the school syllabus must discuss about the menses and its related matter because these things enable the adolescent girls prepares them to face any problems with regard to menstruation.

Limitations

The present study is conducted in Sangeethapatty Village Panchayat of Omalur Taluk in Salem district. The respondents are also 32 and in order

to generalize the results of the present study then it requires more number of respondents and that should be representing from the larger geographical area.

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