



Knowledge Of Menstrual Hygiene Among Female Secondary School Students In Khana, Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined knowledge of menstrual hygiene practices among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of female senior secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of two hundred and fifty participants for the study. Data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire and analyzed using simple frequencies, percentages and chi-square at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of this study showed that 55.8% of the population had good knowledge of menstrual hygiene. It revealed that 100% have heard of menstrual cycle. 33.9% of the respondents indicated that the normal duration of a menstrual cycle is 27 days while more than half (66.1%) indicated 28 days. Majority (83.5%) of the population know their menstrual cycle. The tested hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between menstrual cycle and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school student. It was concluded that more than half of respondents had good knowledge of menstruation. However, menstrual cycle influences practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students and recommended that the government of Nigeria in collaboration with its stalk holders should develop and disseminate reproductive health programmes on menstrual hygiene management targeting both parents and their adolescents. Moreover, parents should be made aware about the need to support their children with appropriate sanitary materials.

Keywords: menstrual cycle, girl child, students, menstrual hygiene, adolescents

INTRODUCTION

One of the unique events in the life of a developing girl child during puberty is menstruation. It involves the cyclical shedding of the inner lining of the uterus which is controlled by the hormones produced by the hypothalamus and pituitary glands located in the brain (Poureslami & Osati-Ashtiani, 2002). Gultie, Hailu and Workineh (2011) stated that, 'the age at which women experience their first menstrual flow (menarche) varies widely across the world but generally most studies report that it occurs between ages of 11 and 15 years.' Although the age at which women stop menstruating is not the same in all nations (Thomas, Renaud, Benefice, De-Meeüs & Guegan, 2001).

However, in some societies onset of menstruation is celebrated, it is the beginning of imposition of dietary and social restrictions at some other places (Pokhrel, Mahantashetti, Angolkar & Devkota, 2014). This socio-cultural imposition during the period of menstruation makes some menstruating females perceive this phenomenon not only as burdensome but also, as an event that ushers in fear, disgust, and shame.

Provision of adequate knowledge and positive attitude on menstruation before menarche could make young females view menstruation as an important milestone in their lives and just a natural

phenomenon. Parents and close relations are expected to be the foremost source of information on menstruation to young females but unfortunately in Africa, parent-child communication about sexually related matters are poor. Hence most adolescents acquire sometimes incorrect information on the reproductive system from their friends (Izugbara, 2007).

Poureslami and Osati-Ashtiani (2002) opined that Low knowledge on menstruation increases the risk of contracting reproductive tract infections as well as pelvic inflammatory diseases and urinary tract diseases among millions of women across the world, because they are unable to manage their menstrual periods well enough. Good menstrual hygiene management involves women or adolescent females using clean blood-absorbing materials which can be changed often in a secure place in privacy after which soap and water are available to wash hand and body as well as having access to secured used sanitary material disposal facility (UNESCO, 2014). Several studies conducted among students especially adolescents across the world have rather shown inadequate knowledge of menstruation and poor menstrual hygiene practices (Water Aid, 2009).

Ali and Rizvi (2010) stated that menstrual hygiene practice is influenced by many factors including female's knowledge about menstruation. In relation to cultural taboos females are often deprived of utilizing the main resources in the community. Furthermore, academic performance and involvement is highly affected by different conditions associated with menstruation (Sudheshna & Dasgupta, 2012). Although the period of adolescence is a healthy part of life, many adolescents are often less informed, less experienced and less comfortable with accessing reproductive health information and services than adults (Ramachandra, Gilyaru, Eregowda & Yathiraja, 2016).

Many schools do not support adolescent girls or female teachers in managing menstrual hygiene with dignity. Inadequate water and sanitation facilities make managing menstruation very difficult, and poor sanitary protection materials can result in blood-stained clothes causing stress and embarrassment. Even at the household level, they generally have little control over access to a private latrine or money for sanitary materials (Dasgupta & Sarkar, 2008).

In Rivers State, Khana to be precise, it was discovered that secondary school girls and women are faulting in the area of proper menstrual hygiene, with little or no knowledge about what it entails to practice good menstrual hygiene. Hence, this study tends to investigate the knowledge of menstrual hygiene among secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. However, researchers will use this study as a reference point on addressing and planning better strategies to offer counselling and quality information and communication services to students and strengthen their practice of menstrual hygiene both in awareness and campaigns. Therefore, the study intends to examine the knowledge of menstrual hygiene practices among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State. A sample size of two hundred and fifty was determined using a random sampling method. A self-developed and structured questionnaire was composed to extract information on the variables of the study. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to respondents. The questionnaire was designed to obtain responses using alternative responses pattern. Data collected were entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20.0) software for analysis and data were presented using frequency, percentages and chi-square.

RESULTS

Table 4.1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Socio-demographic characteristics*	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Age		
10-15	151	62.4
16-20	69	28.5
21-25	22	9.1
Total	242	100
Class		
SS1	107	44.2
SS2	114	47.1
SS3	21	8.7
Total	242	100.0
Religion		
Christianity	218	90.1
Islam	-	-
Traditional	24	9.9
Total	242	100.0
Ethnicity		
Ogoni	133	55
Igbo	69	28.5
Hausa	16	6.6
Yoruba	24	9.9
Others	-	-
Total	242	100.0
Who do you live with		
Parents	197	81.4
Guidance	45	18.6
Total	242	100.0

*Non responses excluded.

Table 4.1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The table revealed that 62.4% of the respondents were within the ages of 10-15 years, 28.5% (16-20 years) and 9.1% (21-25 years). 44.2% were in SS1, 47.1% SS2 while 8.7% were in SS3. Majority (90.1%) the respondents were Christians. while 9.9% were traditional worshipers. Majority (55%) of the population were Ogonis, 28.5% were Igbos, 6.6 were Hausa while 9.9% were Yoruba. 81.4% of the respondents' lives with their parents while 18.6% lives with guidance.

Table 4.2: Knowledge of menstrual hygiene

Practice	Knowledge of Menstrual Hygiene	
	Good	Poor
Yes	111(82.2)	61(57.0)
No	24(17.8)	46(43.0)
Total	135(55.8)	107(44.2)

Table 4.2 showed the knowledge of menstrual hygiene among participants. The result revealed that 55.8% of the respondents had adequate knowledge of menstrual hygiene while 44.2% had poor knowledge of menstrual hygiene.

Table 4.3: influence of menstrual cycle on practice of menstrual hygiene

How did you hear about breast cancer	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Have you heard of menstrual cycle		
Yes	242	100.0
No	-	-
Total	242	100.0
Calendar is used in calculating menstrual cycle		
Yes	242	100.0
No	-	-
Total	242	100.0
What is the normal duration of a menstrual cycle		
26 days	-	-
27 days	82	33.9
28 days	160	66.1
Total	242	100.0
Do you know your menstrual cycle		
Yes	202	83.5
No	40	16.5
Total	242	100.0

*Multiple responses excluded

Table 4.3 investigated the influence of menstrual cycle on practice of menstrual hygiene. The table revealed that all the respondents (100%) have heard of menstrual cycle. All of the population (100%) agreed that calendar is used for calculating menstrual cycle. 33.9% of the respondents indicated that the normal duration of a menstrual cycle is 27 days while more than half (66.1%) indicated 28 days. Majority (83.5%) of the population know their menstrual cycle.

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between menstrual cycle and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area

Table 4.4: Chi-squared test showing the relationship between menstrual cycle and practice of menstrual hygiene

Menstrual cycle	Practice of Hygiene		Total	df	X ² -value	P-value	Decision
	Yes	No					
Yes	156(76.5)	48(23.5)	204(100)	1	18.403	.000	Rejected
No	16(42.1)	22(57.9)	38(100)				
Total	172(71.1)	70(28.9)	242(100)				

Significant p<0.000

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between menstrual cycle and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area. The finding of the study revealed a significant relationship between menstrual cycle and practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students (p<0.05, df = 1, X² = 18.403). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION

The finding of the study revealed that more than half (55%) of the respondents had good knowledge of menstrual hygiene indicating a fair level of knowledge among participants despite their lack of sexual education from parents. The finding of the study corroborates that Funmto et al (2017) and Ranjaribir et al (2018) who discovered in their studies that females had good knowledge of menstrual hygiene. However, those who had this knowledge were related to those whose sisters discussed with them and those who lived with their parents. The similarities between these studies might be due to

the fact that education, cultural background, type of school and family upbringing played an important role in knowledge of menstrual hygiene among young females.

The finding of the study revealed that all the respondents (100%) have heard of menstrual cycle. All of the population (100%) agreed that calendar is used for calculating menstrual cycle. 33.9% of the respondents indicated that the normal duration of a menstrual cycle is 27 days while more than half (66.1%) indicated 28 days. Majority (83.5%) of the population know their menstrual cycle. The finding of the study is in agreement with the studies of Paris et al (2014) and that of Afzal et al (2017) whose studies found that knowledge of menstrual cycle influences the practice of menstrual hygiene as most of the population who knows their next menstrual period prepared adequately, bought their sanitary pads and others washing materials to be able to keep themselves comfortable during their menstrual period. This also indicates that girls who don't know about their menstrual cycle may not practice proper menstrual hygiene as they would be taken unaware. However, proper explanation on how to calculate menstrual cycle may help these girls know their menstrual cycle.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data and findings, it was concluded that 55.8% respondents had good knowledge of menstruation. However, it was discovered that menstrual cycle influences practice of menstrual hygiene among female secondary school students in Khana Local Government Area of Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the result of the finding, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government of Nigeria in collaboration with its stalk holders should develop and disseminate reproductive health programmes on menstrual hygiene management targeting both parents and their adolescents. Moreover, parents should be made aware about the need to support their children with appropriate sanitary materials.
2. The government, federal, state, and local authorities and stakeholders should put in place special programmes targeting young girls including students on how to prevent behaviours that put them at risk of poor menstrual hygiene.
3. Government, ministries of health and non-governmental organizations at all level should mount more intensive enlightenment campaigns through public talk, seminars, conferences and workshop to create more awareness on the need for improvement in knowledge, attitude and practice of menstrual hygiene.

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