



## Hygiene Practice during Menstruation among Adolescence School Girls

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Poor sanitation at schools is correlated with absenteeism and dropouts. There is conclusive evidence that girls' attendance in school is increased through improved sanitation. **Objective:** The aim of the study was to assess hygiene practice during menstruation among adolescence school girls. **Methods:** A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among conveniently selected 240 adolescent girls. Pre-tested modified questionnaire was used and face to face interview was conducted to get data. **Results:** Mean age of respondents was 15.46±1.17 years. Mean monthly family income of respondents was 288.47±54.56 USD. About 18%, 33% and 49% respondents used sanitary napkin, cotton and old piece of cloth respectively. About 64.4% & 24% girls changed used materials three times and four times daily respectively. Most of the respondents (73%) cleaned the materials with water and soap. Majority of the respondents (43%) dried cloth in sun light followed by 20%, 24% and 13% dried in dark and damp place, in the bathroom and in other places respectively. **Conclusion:** About 82% did not use sanitary napkin during menstruation.

**Key words:** Hygiene, Menstruation, Adolescent girl

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Women by nature are subject to menstruation after attaining the age of puberty. In certain days of the month, they menstruate which is also called "period". Menstruation therefore is a very important and confidential matter for every girl and woman. It is very essential to know how young or adolescent girls manage this very confidential but important matter. Also, a closely related question: Are they managing menstruation hygienically? [1] Menstruation is one of the critical changes that occur in female in her normal life. Though it is a natural phenomenon, most of the adolescent girls have some wrong beliefs and behavior regarding menstruation. They are unaware of their unhygienic menstrual practices and its consequences. Healthy hygienic practice reduce the morbidities of women and sometimes even death [2]. Over decades, women have been taught that having 'period' is shameful. They have indirectly, if not directly, absorbed the messages that menstrual blood is dirty, smelly, unhygienic and unclean. This message may be perpetuated by advertisements for menstrual products or "feminine hygiene" even the term "feminine hygiene" implies that help is needed with hygiene. With this entire negative message, it is natural for women to want to hide their blood and throw it away as garbage. To do otherwise is to go against what they have been taught as women. But menstruation is a natural physical process- a harmless by-product of a biological event [3]. Maintaining hygiene during menses is important for women's well-being, mobility, and dignity. The topic of menstruation is cloaked in secrecy and negativity; in many countries it is associated with cultural and religious taboos, and is therefore completely neglected. Menstrual hygiene is important for both mental and physical health management. The present study was an attempt to explore hygiene practice during menstruation among adolescence school girls.

### 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Study design:** It was a descriptive type of cross sectional study

**Study Population:** Study population of this study was adolescent school girls in a selected school of Dhaka city.

**Study site:** The study was carried out in ward no. 2 of Dhaka North City Corporation, Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

**Study area:** Monipur High School & College is a secondary school & college located in Mirpur, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Around 20,500 students including boys and girls are currently studying at Monipur High School & College.

**Study Period:** The study was conducted the period from September 2014 to December 2014.

**Sample size:** Due to shortage of budget and time limitation researcher took 240 samples

**Inclusion criteria:** Those Adolescent school girls aged between 12-18 years who gave informed consent to participate in the study.

**Exclusion criteria:** Those who refused to give informed consent.

**Sampling technique:** Non probability convenient sampling technique was applied for the study.

**Data collection tools:** Data were collected by using pre-tested modified questionnaire through interview technique.

**Data collection technique:** By face to face interview

**Data management and analysis:** Data were entered on the computer programs (SPSS 16.0, Chicago). Cleaned and processed data was presented in the form of tables and charts. Finally the data was interpreted on the basis of study findings.

### 3. RESULTS

**Table 1:** Socio-demographic characteristics of the study subjects (N=240)

Characteristics	Mean $\pm$ SD and Frequency n(%)
Age in years	15.46 $\pm$ 1.176
Monthly family income in USD	288.47 $\pm$ 54.56
<b>Education of mother</b>	
Primary	28(11.67)
Secondary School Certificate	105(43.75)
Higher Secondary Certificate	77(32.08)
$\geq$ Graduate	30(12.5)
<b>Occupation of mother</b>	
Service	53(22.08)
Business	22(9.17)
Jobless	20(8.34)
Housewife	114(47.50)
Others	31(12.91)
<b>Religion</b>	
Muslim	163(68)
Hindu	53(22)
Christian	24(10)
Total	240(100)

Mean age of respondents was 15.46 $\pm$ 1.17 years. Majority of the respondent's mother's (43.75%) education was secondary level and 32.08%, 12.5%, 11.67% was higher secondary,  $\geq$ graduate and primary respectively. Housewife and service holder was 47.50% and 22.08%. Mean monthly family income of respondents was 288.47 $\pm$ 54.56 USD and 68 % of them were Muslim.

**Table 2:** Distribution of the respondents by material used during menstrual period (N=240).

Used material	Frequency	Percent
Sanitary pad	61	18.0
Cotton	84	33.0
Old piece of cloth	95	49.0
Total	240	100.0

Table 2 shows that 18% of the respondents used sanitary napkin followed by 33% and 49% was cotton and old piece of cloth respectively.

**Table 3:** Distribution of the respondents by frequency of changing the used materials (N=240).

Change the used materials	Frequency	Percent
One times daily	21	2.6
Two times daily	33	9.0
Three times daily	122	64.4
Four times daily	64	24.0
Total	240	100.0

Table 3 reveals that 2.6% of the respondents changed the used materials one times daily followed by 9%, 64.4% & 24% changed two times, three times and four times daily respectively.

**Figure 1:** Distribution of the respondents by cleaning agent used.

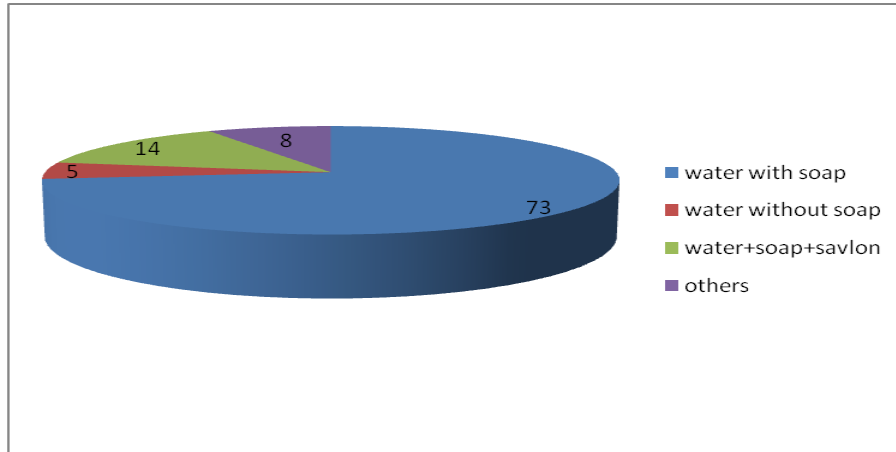


Figure 1 shows that most of the respondents (73%) cleaned the materials with water and soap followed by 5%, 14% and 8% used water without soap, water + soap + savlon (antiseptic) and with other materials respectively.

**Figure 2:** Distribution of the respondents by drying technique.

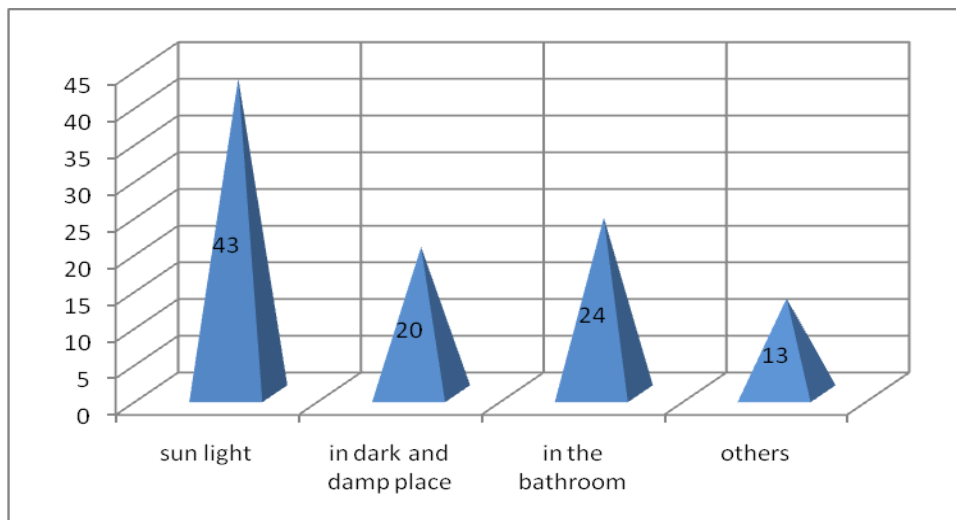


Figure 2 reveals that majority of the respondents (43%) dried cloth in sun light followed by 20%, 24% and 13% dried in dark and damp place, in the bathroom and in other places respectively.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

Our study revealed that 18% used sanitary napkin followed by 33% and 49% used cotton and old piece of cloth respectively. A study was done in Nigeria showed similar findings [4]. Also our study showed that school girls generally did not have adequate knowledge of menstrual hygiene. However, eighty three percent women reported the need of 1-2 pads prepared for 24 hrs. Most of the 84% understood the concept of perennial hygiene for keeping the parts clean and comfortable [5]. Menstrual hygiene among rural adolescent girls proved that regarding the practices of menstrual hygiene, only 10 girls were using boiled and dried cloth as menstrual absorbent. Although almost all 64 girls received advice regarding menstrual hygiene from different sources, some of their practices were unhygienic. This shows that the mothers of these girls were lacking of right knowledge and the same thing was transferred to their off-springs. Before bringing any change in menstrual practices they should be educated about the facts of menstruation and its physiological implications [6]. The present study found majority of the respondents (43%) dried cloth in sun light followed by 20%, 24% and 13% dried in dark and damp place, in the bathroom and in other places respectively. In an attempt to accumulate experiences of menarche among adolescent girls, 123 nursing students of the proficiency certificate level were involved. And the findings were rituals, mentioned by almost all that they were kept isolated in the dark rooms. The study suggests that development of pamphlets, posters and booklets on menstrual hygiene is required for providing information not only to the adolescents but also to their parents, as the attention paid to adolescent health is almost nonexistent, and their reproductive health is poorly understood by most parents and society. Some modifications should

be made in the rituals, such as isolation may not be necessary but maintaining personal and perennial hygiene should be encouraged [7].

Limitations of studies are very common in social work. One of the major difficulties was the time constraint. The concern of the research topic often shaped various forms of psychosomatic defense among the interviewees. In general, the respondents hesitated to discuss their income level. Some respondents were incapable of understanding the importance for conducting a study. In some cases they showed non-cooperation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The menstrual hygiene practice is important to prevent infection. We found that 82% did not use sanitary napkin during menstruation. More than half of the respondents changed used materials three times daily. Besides 73% of the study subjects cleaned used materials with water and soap and about 43% of the respondents dried cloth in sun light. Adolescence girls should give priority on hygiene practice during menstruation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors express their sincere thanks to all the patients of this study. No external funding was provided for this study.

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Cite this article: **Mst. Nadira Parvin, Md Monoarul Haque, Bonita Parvin, Mohammad Shahinoor Islam, Mosammat Surayia Begum, Sabita Rani Mondol.** Hygiene Practice during Menstruation among Adolescence School Girls. *The American Journal of Innovative Research and Applied Sciences*. 2015; 1(3): 99-102.

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