

Attitudes Towards Dysmenorrhea Among College Students in Nainital

Neelam Rai

Research Scholar, Department of Nursing, Shri Venkateshwara University, Nainital, India

Abstract: This paper presents attitudes towards dysmenorrhea among college students in Nainital.

Keywords: attitudes towards dysmenorrhea

1. Introduction

Many girls with severe painful cramps suffer for years before seeking treatment, as it is perceived that pain is a natural part of the menstrual cycle. Menstrual pain occurs before the onset of menstruation and/or during the menstruation. The menstrual cycle is a very important indicator of women's reproductive health and endocrine function, and some of these menstrual characteristics, such as irregularity in the menstrual cycle, premenstrual pain and discomfort at the time of menstruation, and a heavy menstrual discharge, might affect the general and/or reproductive health of a woman, as well as her productivity.

Dysmenorrhea might be a symptom of endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, adenomyosis, Asherman's syndrome (rare), and cervical stenosis, and could eventually cause infertility (Monga, 2006). As dysmenorrhea is a common problem for a majority of adolescent girls, it is essential that these girls are aware of the normal and abnormal symptoms of menstruation. It is equally important to persuade adolescent females to seek medical advice for their problems, as dysmenorrhea could lead to reproductive system complications. dysmenorrhea has an adverse effect on school performance, such as low concentration, school absenteeism, as well as limited participation in sports and social activities (Kindi & Bulushi, 2009). Kindi & Bulushi (2009) also stated that dysmenorrhea has both an academic and social affect, with only 3% of their participants with dysmenorrhea consulting a medical doctor. The study population included students from bachelor of science (chemistry, Physics and zoology) courses, who study the reproductive system in there plus 2 education. Thus, the present study was undertaken with the objective of assessing the attitudes towards dysmenorrhea in adolescent girls.

2. Method

A. Study design and methods

This study was a descriptive cross-sectional survey that was done using a non-probability convenient sampling method.

B. Study setting

This study was carried out at selected colleges in Nainital

C. Participants

200 degree students selected from selected college of Nainital'.

D. Data collection

Data were collected by using an anonymous, self-administered questionnaire that contained both open- and close-ended questions. A pilot test was done using the same questionnaire for 10 students attending another college from the researcher's home area. All ambiguities were corrected before the administration of the questionnaire to the proper sample. Pourslami and Ashtiani (2002) carried out a similar pilot test in their study on Iranian adolescents, and Kindi & Bulushi (2009) also developed a structured questionnaire based on their pilot study.

Twenty questions under four subsections were created to achieve the set specific objectives. The students were asked personal demographic and menstrual details, and attitudes towards menstrual pain. Specific, precise, and simple wording was used in the questionnaire, which was initially developed in English and then translated into Hindi

Upon completion of the data collection, a leaflet with information about abnormalities of the menstrual cycle, dysmenorrhea, its pathophysiology, causes, and importance of treatment, including pain-relief methods, was distributed to the students.

E. Data analysis

Data were analyzed by using descriptive statistics. All data were presented using tables and bar charts. Statistical significance was obtained by χ^2 -test. Analysis was done manually, as by SPSS (version 15; IBM Corporation, Chicago, IL, USA).

3. Results

All 200 students completed the questionnaire. In terms of religious distribution, 97% of the participants were hindus, 1% were Christians, and 2% were Muslims. When considering the subject stream distribution, the majority of students were from the Arts stream (45.5%), followed by 18.5% from the chemistry, 17% from the zoology, and 19% from the Physics.

Of the 200 participants, a large proportion (n = 168, 84%)

suffered from dysmenorrhea. When considering the severity of menstrual pain, the majority of the students (59%) experienced moderate pain during their menstruation. Severe pain was experienced by 14%. According to the results, 79% of students reported regular menstruation, and only 49% marked the first day of menstruation on a calendar.

The most common symptom was physical discomfort (84%), followed by restlessness (20%) and stress (19%). Pain was localized mainly in the abdomen, as reported by 56% of the participants.

The main pain-relief methods were rest (64%), followed by medication (55%), hot fermentation (20%), exercise (5%), and yoga (3%). The majority of students used paracetamol as the drug of choice for pain relief. The majority of participants (85.2%) in the present study stated that they used drugs before the onset of menstruation, and only 14.8% of them used drugs after the onset of menstruation. Thirteen percent had undergone medical tests for menstrual pain.

In the present study, frequent episodes of anger, reduced concentration, and impaired decision-making were categorized as contributing to the mental status of participants, while participating in sports was taken as contributing to the physical status. Going on holidays and parties was regarded as contributing to their social status. According to the cross-tabulation between pain and frequent episodes of anger, reduced concentration, and impaired decision-making, 66% of students with dysmenorrhea were mentally affected. When χ^2 -test was performed, it showed a statistically-significant association ($P < 0.03$) between menstrual pain and mental status.

There was no statistically-significant association between menstrual pain and physical status ($P = 0.887$). Only 43.8% of students were found to be socially affected. A statistically-significant association was not observed between pain and social status. Of the study population, 44% reported that menstrual pain resulted in college absenteeism, but it was only frequent in 17%.

Mothers were the most important people to whom the girls turned to for answers regarding dysmenorrhea (93%). In this study, 84% of the participants believed that pain was natural during menstruation, whereas 8.9% thought that menstrual pain would disappear after marriage. Only 11% believed that pain was a symptom of a disease. Almost 90% of the students believed that bathing affects menstrual pain.

4. Discussion and conclusion

Our findings indicate that 44% of students were absent from college, at least occasionally, due to menstrual pain. Frequent absenteeism was reported to be 17%. There was no significant association between pain and the absenteeism. In Pourslami and Ashtiani's (2002) study, 15% of girls were absent from school and other activities. Ortiz et al. (2010) indicated that dysmenorrhea was the cause school absenteeism in 24% of Mexican high school girls. College absenteeism due to

dysmenorrhea should be prevented, as it can affect students' performance in examinations. Menstrual difficulty for adolescents not only affects the education of young women, but has an impact on other aspects of life. Although the present study concentrated only on college students, many young women of the same age group are out of school and employed. Therefore, the contribution from adolescents to the national economy of the country cannot be overlooked when considering female employees of the garment industry in the free-trade zones of the country. No data are available about the prevalence of dysmenorrhea among this population and how it affects their work, family and social life.

In the present study, 84% of students said that pain was a natural thing for them, and 9% believed that it would disappear after marriage. Seven percent admitted that they had not sought medical treatment, as they felt embarrassed to discuss their menstruation with anybody. Only a small proportion (6%) of adolescents stated that pain was associated to another disease in the reproductive tract. Interestingly, bathing was perceived to affect pain, as reported by 95% of the students. This could be due to traditional and cultural influences by elders. Usually bathing is avoided by most girls during the first 3 days of menstruation.

This study was conducted in colleges in Ninital, where students are mostly from middle-to-upper middle-class families. Their access to health care, as well as different forms of information sources, such as mass media and the Internet, is high. This situation might vary in suburban or rural regions.

References

- [1] Abdul-Razzak, K.K., Ayoub, N.M., Abu-Taleb, A.A. and Obeidat, B.A., (2010). Influence of dietary intake of dairy products on dysmenorrhea. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Research*, 36(2), pp. 377-383.
- [2] Brazier Y. (2017). Irregular periods: Symptoms, causes, home remedies, and treatment. *Medical News Today*.
- [3] Banikarim, C., Chacko, M.R. and Kelder, S.H., (2000). Prevalence and impact of dysmenorrhea on Hispanic female adolescents. *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine*, 154(12), pp. 1226-1229.
- [4] Barnard, N.D., Scialli, A.R., Hurlock, D. and Bertron, P., (2000). Diet and sex-hormone binding globulin, dysmenorrhea, and premenstrual symptoms. *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 95(2), pp. 245-250.
- [5] Cleveland Clinic. (2014). Dysmenorrhea. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/4148-dysmenorrhea>
- [6] Dawood, M.Y., (1985). Dysmenorrhea. *The Journal of reproductive medicine*, 30(3), pp.154-167.
- [7] Emedicine.medscape.com. (2017). Dysmenorrhea. <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/253812-treatment#d10>
- [8] EverydayHealth.com. (2013). Can Your Period Change Your Bathroom Habits? <https://www.everydayhealth.com/digestive-health/diarrhea-and-your-period.aspx>
- [9] Gebeyehu, M.B., Mekuria, A.B., Tefera, Y.G., Andarge, D.A., Debay, Y.B., Bejiga, G.S. and Gebresillassie, B.M., (2017). Prevalence, Impact, and Management Practice of Dysmenorrhea among University of Gondar Students, Northwestern Ethiopia: A Cross-Sectional Study. *International journal of reproductive medicine*, 2017, pp.8. 57
- [10] Harada, T., Momoeda, M., Taketani, Y., Hoshi, H. and Terakawa, N., (2008). Low-dose oral contraceptive pill for dysmenorrhea associated with endometriosis: a placebo-controlled, double-blind, randomized trial. *Fertility and sterility*, 90(5), pp. 1583-1588.

- [11] Harel, Z., (2006). Dysmenorrhea in adolescents and young adults: etiology and management. *Journal of pediatric and adolescent gynecology*, 19(6), pp. 363-371.
- [12] Health Blossoms. (2017). 4 Most Common Types of Menstrual Problems for Women.
<https://www.theadventurouswriter.com/blogbaby/4-types-of-menstrualperiod-problems/>