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Research Article

**AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES OF THE YOUNG WOMENS
TOWARDS MENSTRUATION**¹Dr. Abera Iqbal, ²Dr. Muhammad Azfar Maqsood, ³Dr Qurat ul ain Azher¹DHQ Hospital Sahiwal²Medical Officer, DHQ Rajanpur³WMO DHQ Hafizabad**Abstract:**

Objective: The aim of this Research is to determine awareness and knowledge of various attitudes of the young women about the menstruation.

Methodology: The design of this research is descriptive and this research was conducted at Mayo Hospital Lahore in the duration of one year from January 2017 to December 2017. We shortlisted a total of 500 women through non-probability sampling techniques. These women were in the age of menstruation without any discrimination of educational and marital status. We did not include any women facing irregularities of menstruation or any of the psychological issues or gynaecological problem. We documented every information about the patients on a proforma of the questionnaire. Final analysis of the outcomes was made on SPSS software.

Results: We shortlisted a total of 500 women through non-probability sampling techniques. These women were in the age of menstruation without any discrimination of educational and marital status. Among these women 438 out of 500 were menstruating naturally (87.6%); whereas, 62 out of 500 women were perceived menstruation as God's curse or a disease (12.4%). Majority of the women that is 415 out of 500 considered menstruation healthy and good for health (83%); however, 85 women out of 500 considered it as non-healthy for them (17%).

Conclusion: An unsafe practice, ignorance and false perspectives of the young women about the act of menstruation were commonly reported among the selected research population. Therefore, it is very much important to extend awareness and education about the concept of menstruation among well-living and educated rural populations. These educational programs will surely help in the better understanding of menstruation among young women and they will be emotionally ready to accept it as a part of the biological changes happening within their bodies. It will also eradicate all the negative emotions and reactions of young women.

Keywords: Hypothalamus, Pituitary, Menstrual, Mythologized Menarche, Attitudes

Corresponding author:

Dr. Abera Iqbal,
DHQ Hospital,
Sahiwal

QR code



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INTRODUCTION:

Menstruation is referred to a unique phenomenon of the young women which defines the reproductive features of women and the end of these reproductive features [1, 2]. It is cyclic and periodic endometrium shedding against progesterone and estrogen cyclic production from ovaries which is influenced by the hormone released through gonadotrophin from follicle stimulating hormone, and pituitary gland luteinizing hormone [3]. So, for menstruation, the hypothalamus-ovarian axis is to be intact essentially.

There is an important role in the understanding and perception about menstruation among young women which vary from culture to culture [5]. Monthly cycle of the menstruation is and socialized as a unique female feature which is beneficial, normal and natural for the overall well-being of women [6]. Therefore, historically it defined the social status of women in society and it was also taken as a curse on the women that they endure. It was also taken as one of the mystique features of the women and menstrual cycle made the women indifferent among other women. It was also believed that the cycle is influenced through age, nutrition, level of physical activity and lifestyle without any scientific proof or evidence as it has unknown origins [7].

Menstrual cycles are a permanent feature of healthy women throughout their life which describes the reproductive ability of a female [8, 9]. The attitude of the females towards menstruation can pose adverse effects on the image of the body, disease-causing agents perception, willing intake of medicine, dietary habits, pregnancy planning and contraceptive use. Sexual maturity and reproductivity are defined as the proper cycles of menstruation among young women and it also associates with the attitude towards sexual routine and overall behaviour [10].

The peer discussion about the menstrual cycles also revealed its incidence on other females which made its natural perception more positive and these sharing removed many misconceptions among young females [11]. Another prevalent misunderstanding lies in the psychosocial and cultural barriers because ignoring the menstruation cycle will be a denial of the female needs and their management. There is also an element of consciousness because menstruation is also considered among social stigmas [12]. We need to consider the medical and societal aspects of the menstruation as it is also considered among taboos in few societies. In Pakistan, the Muslim women do not disclose menstruation and face severe loss of blood; they do not consult a gynaecologist which ends in the

shape of severe anaemia [13].

Western societies are more aware and educated than ours about the various bodily changes throughout the lifespan, their reaction to such changes is also different and better [14]. Prepubertal girls receive a mixed message from the society about the act of menstruation, they are also congratulated as they have completed all the features of complete women and at the same time, they are also warned to keep it like a secret which makes the situation confusing [15]. The research aims to determine awareness and knowledge of various attitudes of the young women about the menstruation.

METHODOLOGY:

The design of this research is descriptive and this research was conducted at Mayo Hospital Lahore in the duration of one year from January 2017 to December 2017. We shortlisted a total of 500 women through non-probability sampling techniques. These women were in the age of menstruation without any discrimination of educational and marital status. We did not include any women facing irregularities of menstruation or any of the psychological issues or gynaecological problem.

The information about the address, age, marital status, education and occupation was taken after an informed consent of the young women. We also documented knowledge, awareness, attitude and perception about menstruation of these women in our research. Presentation of age was made through values of mean and standard deviation; whereas, qualitative variables were defined through percentage and frequency. We documented every information about the patients on a Performa of the questionnaire. Final analysis of the outcomes was made on SPSS software.

RESULTS:

We shortlisted a total of 500 women through non-probability sampling techniques. These women were in the age of menstruation without any discrimination of educational and marital status. Among these women 438 out of 500 were menstruating naturally (87.6%); whereas, 62 out of 500 women were perceived menstruation as God's curse or a disease (12.4%). Majority of the women that is 415 out of 500 considered menstruation healthy and good for health (83%); however, 85 women out of 500 considered it as non-healthy for them (17%). Mean age factor among 500 young women was reported as (23.94 ± 5.03) years; whereas, range, mode and median were respectively 24, 20 and 22 with a maximum and minimum age of 38 and 14 years

respectively. Study population features were described through descriptive socio-demographic analysis. Detailed socio-demographic data and menstruation features are respectively given in Table – I & II. Emotionally 266 participants felt embarrassed about menstruation (53.2%). Majority of the young women also avoided sex, bathing and physical activity during this period which was reported in respectively 191 cases (38.2%), 82 cases

(16.4%) and 85 cases (17%). No specific food intake was observed by 387 women (77.4%); whereas 113 women (22.6%) were careful about dietary intake and they took vegetables, fruits and soups during the menstruation period. No food avoidance was reported in 265 women (53%); however, 235 women (47%) avoided meat, pickle, eggs, milk, fish, ladyfinger, yoghurt and cold drinks. Menstruation also affected the physical activity of the respondents.

Table – I: Sociodemographic Outcomes

| Variables | | Number | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|--------|------------|
| Age | < 20 Years | 250 | 50.00 |
| | 21 – 30 Years | 200 | 40.00 |
| | > 30 Years | 50 | 10.00 |
| Socioeconomic Status Monthly Income | Poor < 5,000 | 202 | 40.40 |
| | Middle 5,000 - 10,000 | 48 | 9.60 |
| | Upper > 10,000 | 250 | 50.00 |
| Educational Status | Nil | 298 | 59.60 |
| | Primary | 8 | 1.60 |
| | Middle | 2 | 0.40 |
| | Metric | 3 | 0.60 |
| | FA/FSC | 5 | 1.00 |
| | Graduate | 184 | 36.80 |

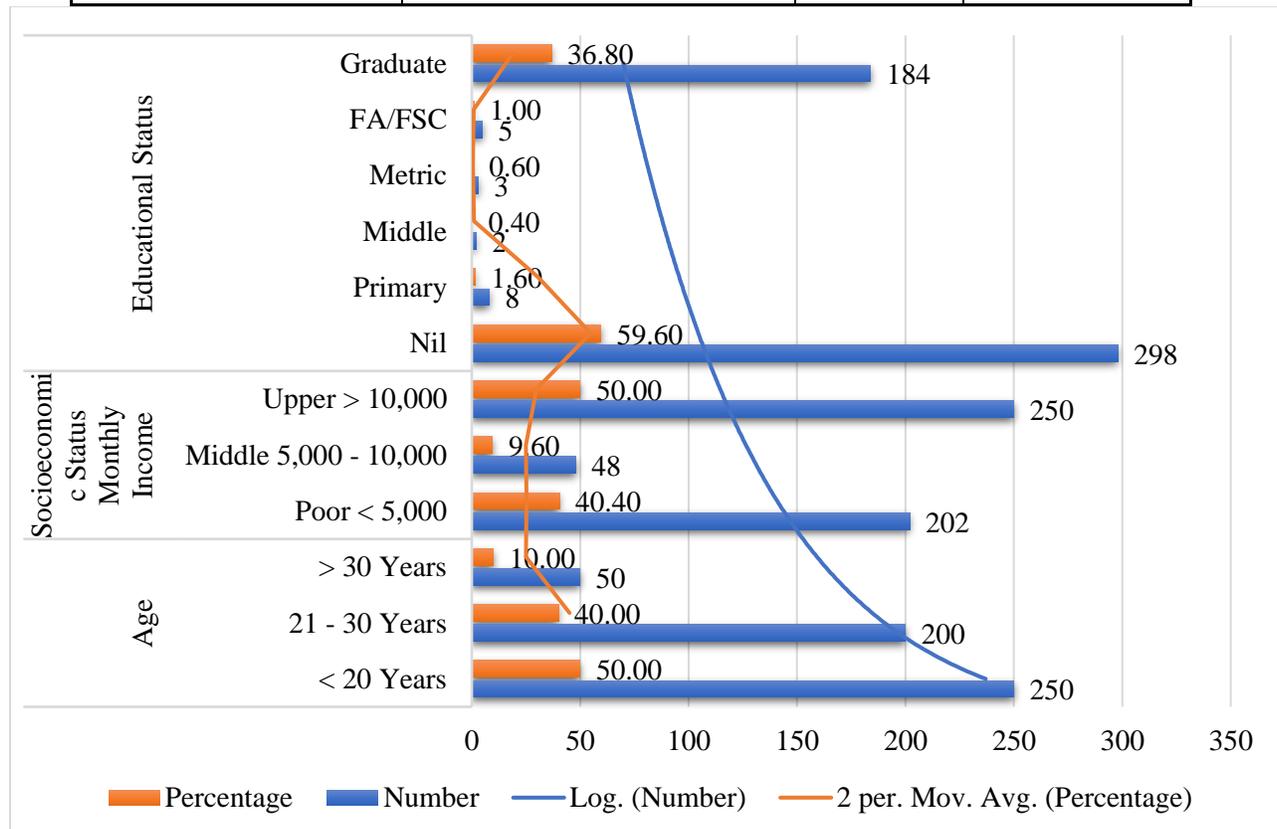
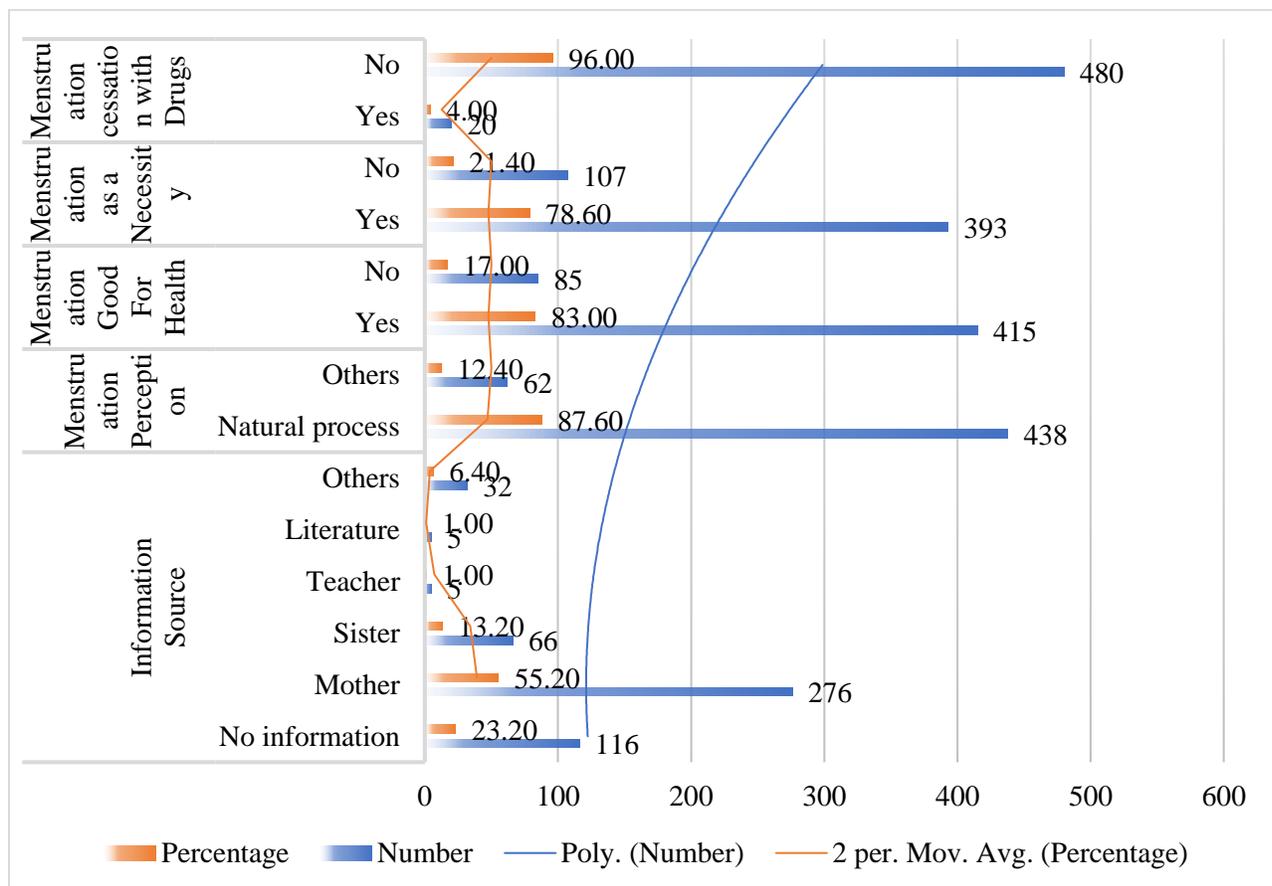


Table – II: Menstrual Characteristics

| Socio-Demographic Information | | Number | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------|--------|------------|
| Information Source | No information | 116 | 23.20 |
| | Mother | 276 | 55.20 |
| | Sister | 66 | 13.20 |
| | Teacher | 5 | 1.00 |
| | Literature | 5 | 1.00 |
| | Others | 32 | 6.40 |
| Menstruation Perception | Natural process | 438 | 87.60 |
| | Others | 62 | 12.40 |
| Menstruation Good for Health | Yes | 415 | 83.00 |
| | No | 85 | 17.00 |
| Menstruation as a Necessity | Yes | 393 | 78.60 |
| | No | 107 | 21.40 |
| Menstruation cessation with Drugs | Yes | 20 | 4.00 |
| | No | 480 | 96.00 |

**DISCUSSION:**

Our research reported numerous misconceptions, practices and perceptions about the menstruation among young females as reported in the outcomes of

various other countries throughout the world. Embarrassment was shared about the menarche towards emotional response among 266 young females (53.2%) and same has been reported in the

outcomes of a research conducted by Tang CS [16]. Tang CS reported that about 85% young females were embarrassed and annoyed because of the menstruation. Young females' respondents answered the question about the menstruation perception as natural which was observed in 438 females (87.6%), they considered it as a natural cleaning process; whereas, according to Master only twelve percent females considered it as a cleansing system [17].

Majority of the young women also avoided sex, bathing and physical activity during this period which was reported in respectively 191 cases (38.2%), 82 cases (16.4%) and 85 cases (17%). No specific food intake was observed by 387 women (77.4%); whereas 113 women (22.6%) were careful about dietary intake and they took vegetables, fruits and soups during the menstruation period. No food avoidance was reported in 265 women (53%); however, 235 women (47%) avoided meat, pickle, eggs, milk, fish, ladyfinger, yoghurt and cold drinks. Menstruation also affected the physical activity of the respondents. Whereas, Snow is of the view that 37.5% of females avoided cold air and water in the course of the menstrual cycle.

CONCLUSION:

Girls are to be educated about the menstruation well before entering into puberty as it makes them mentally ready to accept the reality of the natural truth of menstruation as it completes them and confirms the reproductive potential in the girls. Negative perceptions are also removed through proper teaching about the menstruation. An unsafe practice, ignorance and false perspectives of the young women about the act of menstruation were commonly reported among the selected research population. Therefore, it is very much important to extend awareness and education about the concept of menstruation among well-living and educated rural populations. These educational programmes will help in the better understanding of menstruation among young women and they will be emotionally ready to accept it as a part of the biological changes happening within their bodies. It will also eradicate all the negative emotions and reactions of young women.

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