



Assessment of knowledge regarding menstrual cup among reproductive women in a selected colleges at Salem Dt, Tamilnadu.

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Abstract

Background: The menstrual cup is a recently developed alternative to sanitary napkins. Hence, in this present study, the knowledge of menstrual cups among reproductive women in the colleges were assessed.

Methods: Survey design was used for this study. Samples were collected through non probability convenient sampling technique between the age group age group of 17 to above 35 years. The relevant data were collected by using Google form through virtual mode after getting the consent from participants. Totally 512 samples were responded. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results: Out of 512 participants the present study results showed that 80% had inadequate knowledge, 12% of the study participants reported that they have moderate knowledge about the menstrual cup, and only 8% had adequate knowledge about the menstrual cup. The educational level of the participants was mostly in the students (75.5%) or others staff members (24.5%). 63% of the participants know that menstrual cup is made up of silicone, 20% said plastic, 17% said not aware, it is made up of all the materials mentioned above. Interestingly, 80% of the study participants reported that they were using sanitary pads, only 12% of the study participants reported using menstrual cups.

Conclusion: This study concluded that many of the participants were unaware about menstrual cup and they

are not familiar about usage of the cup. This study also pointed out the importance of the awareness campaigns about the use of the menstrual cup as they can help to build good menstrual hygiene among reproductive women.

Keywords: Knowledge, reproductive women, menstrual cup, menstrual health.

Introduction

Millions of women globally experience menstruation every month. It is a normal biological process. The start of menstruation indicates the start of the reproductive years in female life. A woman's life is not so easy managing her home, work, and family at a time. Every month, 1.8 billion people across the world menstruate. Millions of these girls, women, transgender men and non-binary persons are unable to manage their menstrual cycle in a dignified, healthy way. Gender inequality, discriminatory social norms, cultural taboos, poverty and lack of basic services like toilets and sanitary products can all cause menstrual health.

Women consider the topic of menstrual hygiene as taboo and hesitate to discuss their feelings or experiences. Yet, among women aged 17 to above 35 years who menstruate, the average period lasts three to seven days per month, 6.25 years (2,280 days) over a lifetime. During that time, over 10,000 tampons and pads are used once and thrown away, which is not an eco-friendly thing. Now a days menstrual cup is available, as an alternative for sanitary napkins.

The menstrual cup is a reusable, non-toxic, and non-allergic silicone device that can be used to capture menstrual fluids made up of silicon that is non-allergic and not toxic. After insertion of the menstrual cup, it opens in an oval shape and has to be positioned between the posterior fornix and pubic bone, covering the cervix. To remove it, a finger has to be hooked over the rim behind the pubic bone.

Menstrual cups have been available for decades, but their use remains limited. Despite its safety, eco-friendliness, affordability, and durability, several barriers to adoption persist. Thus, this study was conducted with to assess the adaptability of menstrual cups by examining the level of satisfaction among reproductive women. The study also intends to examine the efficacy of menstrual cups in terms of experienced and perceived ease of usage by the women in the study.

Studies have pointed out that in India, menstrual health management should be strengthened by providing proper education about the menstrual hygiene. Spreading awareness about the usage of hygienic

absorbents and their disposal, and managing them menstrual flow effectively and hygienically. Menstrual health and hygiene interventions can help overcome these obstacles. Not only do they fulfil the unmet demand for menstrual hygiene products; they also protect dignity, build confidence, and strengthen sexual and reproductive health.

Methodology

Survey design was used for this study. Samples were collected through non probability convenient sampling technique between the age group agegroupof17 to above 35years. Therelevantdatawerecollected by using Google form through virtual mode after getting the consent from participants.

Inclusion Criteria

- ✓ Women in the reproductive age group of i.e.17-above 35 years
- ✓ Who were studying or working in the institution were included in this study.

Exclusion Criteria

- ✓ Women who are unwilling
- ✓ Adolescent girls who have not reached menarche

Results

In this study total of 512 participants were included. The maximum of participants was in the age group of 18 years to 20 years. Among them, 69 % of the participants got information from media, 6 % from family, 25 % from friends. The educational level of the participants was mostly in the students (75.5%) or others staff members (24.5%). 63 % of the participants know that menstrual cup is made up of silicone, 20 % said plastic, 17% said not aware ,it is made up of all the materials mentioned above. Interestingly, 80 % of the study participants reported that they were using sanitary pads, only 12 % of the study participants reported using menstrual cups or tampons. Only 8 % of the participants mentioned using other methods.17 % said that washing with disinfectant for menstrual cup washing, 20 % said washing with running water is required, and 63% said washing with soap water is required for proper sanitization of menstrual cups. The main concern

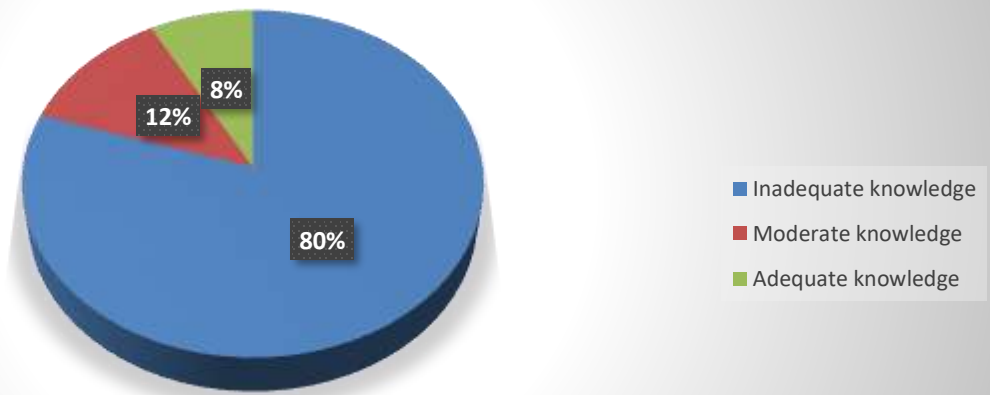
about them menstrual cup was 80 % found to may be leakage & discomfort at sleeping time,10 % said that no leakages and 10 % said that leakages at sleeping time.6% said use of menstrual cup increase the infection , 92 % said reduce the infection & 2% said that no effects while using menstrual cup.68 % of the participants were compared cost effective to sanitary pad.32 % not ready think and compared about the cup .However, 22% may be &10% if they recommend using the menstrual cup to others, 41% not recommended to use menstrual cup .80% had inadequate knowledge,12% of the study participants reported that they have moderate knowledge about the menstrual cup, and only8%had Adequate knowledge about the menstrual cup.

Table-1 data's showing selected demographic and knowledge

S.NO	DEMOGRAPHIC DATA	NO'S	%
1	Age in years		
	Below 17 years	0	0
	18 -20 years	387	75.5
	20-22 years	100	19.5
	Above 35 years	25	5
2	Reproductive women from		
	students	387	75.5
	Teaching staff	100	19.5
	Nonteaching staff	25	5
3	Residing area		
	Rural	472	92
	urban	40	8
4	Material used in menstrual cup		
	unaware	88	17
	plastic	102	20

	silicon	322	63
5	How to clean		
	Discard and clean with running water	102	20
	Discard and clean with soap water	322	63
	Discard and clean with disinfectant	88	17
6	Whether having leakage while using menstrual cup during sleeping		
	May be-discomfort	411	80
	Yes	50	10
	No	50	10
7	During menstruation-used		
	Menstrual cup or	31	6
	pads	411	80
	Cloths or others	39	8
	tampons	31	6
8	Effects of menstrual cup		
	No effects	9	2
	Increase the infection	31	6
	Reduce the infection	472	92
9	Cost effect of menstrual cup compared with sanitary pad too high		
	yes	350	68
	No	0	0
	Not ready to think	162	32
9	Will you recommended for friends and family		

	May be	113	22
	Yes	50	10
	Not think and compared	210	41
	No	139	27
10	Heard about menstrual cup		
	yes	411	80
	No	101	20
11	If yes, got information		
	family	27	6
	friends	101	25
	Social media	283	69
12	whether reusable		
	Yes	472	92
	No	40	8
13	Is it eco friendly		
	Yes	413	80
	No	99	20
14	No. of days of flow		
	28 days	376	73
	Above 28 days	100	19
	Below 28 days	36	8
15	Regular or irregular menstrual		
	Regular	480	93
	irregular	32	7

Figure-1 level of knowledge regarding menstrual cup**LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE REGARDING MENSTRUAL CUP****Discussion**

In the present study maximum of the study, participants were in the 17 years to 35 years of age group. Maximum of the study participants were in the student levels. In the past maximum of the studies that assessed the level of knowledge of menstrual cup usage were done in all the women who are in the reproductive group were included.

In a previous study conducted & reported a low percentage of the study population who had good knowledge about the menstrual cup (5.8%). This finding is similar to the finding of the study by Arshad Ali *et al.* In this study authors reported that only 11.4% of the general study population knew about the menstrual cup, most of the participants use sanitary napkins (96.7%) during their menstruation cycle for maintenance of menstruation hygiene. None of the study participants reported usage of menstruation cups.

In contrast the present study 80% had poor knowledge, 12% of the study participants reported that they have moderate knowledge about the menstrual cup, and only 8% had good knowledge about the menstrual cup.

Total of 512 participants were included. The educational level of the participants was mostly in the students (75.5%) or others staff members (24.5%). 63 % of the participants know that menstrual cup is made up of silicone, 20 % said plastic, 17% said not aware, it is made up of all the materials mentioned above. Interestingly, 80 % of the study participants reported that they still use sanitary pads, 12 % of the study participants reported using menstrual cups only 8 % of the participants mentioned using other methods. This

finding was similar to the previous Indian study findings. It was shown that most adolescents and adults still use cloths and sanitary napkins for their menstrual protection.

Aishwarya and Tharani reported that in Bangalore most of the women are already using the menstrual cups and have complete information about them. This study reported that social media is a powerful source of information and maximum of the participants received their information from social media. In the same survey, the respondents reported that the durability, low economic costs, eco-friendliness, and reusable nature of the menstrual cup were the main reason behind its popularity. Low cost of the local sanitary napkins that are easily available.

The main significance of the present study is that though conducted in a limited sample of women & college students from the reproductive stage, the similarity of the present study finding with the previous ones suggests that our study gave insight into the beliefs, concerns, and knowledge of women. In addition, we believe that our findings can provide a significant contribution to the available literature and also guide future studies on menstrual hygiene management in adolescents and working women's and beyond.

Conclusion

In this study, the knowledge regarding the menstrual cup among college going and working reproductive women were evaluated in detail. This study concluded that many of the participants were unaware about menstrual cup and they are not familiar about usage of the cup. There exists a huge gap between the knowledge and willingness of the women to accept the menstrual cup. Even the knowledge level is also poor in most of the participants. This study shows that menstrual cups are a better alternative to the current methods of menstrual sanitation as it is durable, eco-friendly, comfortable, safe, have no need for frequent changing in a day, and have no disposal issues. Adaptability increases gradually through proper counseling, peer support, practice, and consistency.

Especially in rural parts of India, the use of these cups can be implemented as they are cost-effective, eco-friendly, and reusable. This study also pointed out that if made available, most of the participants are willing to use the menstrual cup. Moreover, this study also pointed out the importance of the awareness campaigns about the use of the menstrual cup as they can help to build good menstrual hygiene among reproductive women.

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