

Women's Reaction toward Menstruation

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ABSTRACT: From puberty until menopause, women's biochemistry waxes and wanes to her own unique monthly rhythm, or menstruation cycle. Menstruation and a woman's menstrual cycle play a very important role in her life. This study was carried out to assess woman reaction (feeling, attitude, and practice) and knowledge toward menstruation. This study was conducted in two suburban areas namely Shebin El-Kom and Quesina and 10 rural areas from Menoufyia Governorate. A convenient sample comprised 1023 women aged between 20-45 years, single and married women, educated and none educated from urban and rural areas. The results of the study showed below half of samples received knowledge about menstruation from their mothers and sisters. Regarding feeling above two-thirds of samples had something dirty and unclean about women during menstruation.

INTRODUCTION

From puberty until menopause, a woman's biochemistry waxes and wanes to her own unique monthly rhythm, or menstruation cycle¹ and (The word menstruation is derived from the Latin word menses, which means month². Menstruation and a woman's menstrual cycle play a very large part in her life^{3&4}. If you consider the average woman starts to menstruate at the age of twelve and continues to do so until she is about fifty years of age, experiences a menstrual

period five days in length every twenty-eight days, she spends an average of seven years of her life menstruating⁵. In addition, some aspect of her menstrual cycle may play a part in her life for thirty or more years². The scent of blood can attract the attention of hungry carnivore so menstruating woman could possibly put a group of people at risk of attack.

Menstrual blood, menses, is often seen as having a magical quality and a result has been including magical point⁶.

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On the other hand women need hygiene products, and the advertising of these products, have changed dramatically over the past 88 years⁷. Advertisements are much more open and frank now. Other studies^{8&2} found that late maturation acted as a protective factor against depression in adolescent girls. A woman's psychological response to her body and its functions are strongly influenced by socio-culture norms. One reflection of this is the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of women toward menstruation^{9&10}. A woman's personal knowledge and experience of menstruation may contribute to her concept of being female. Women from all walks of life have spoken and written about their first experience with menstruation and their need to connect to and find comfort in their mothers, including feminists¹¹. If she is raised in a culture to create myths and taboos surrounding menstruation, she will acquire these socio-culture norms and consequently have a devalued sense of self and of being female¹²⁻¹⁴. After menarche, girls feel less comfortable discussing emotionally charged issues with mother and experience less emotional interaction with their fathers than do their pre-monarchial counterparts^{1,15}. Most girls receive information about menstruation from a variety of sources-mothers, peers, schools, and the sources are inadequate and insufficient. Rather than the focus on hygienic crisis established by menstruation, educational programs should become more focused on the menstrual crisis. In schools and at home, concrete presentations of anatomy in order to help the young girl conceptualize the relationship between the inside and outside reproductive organs, as well as the relationship between those organs and her self¹⁴. Negative attitude toward menstruation continues to be passed down to new generations of girls; it will perpetuate a sense of shame for the body, and therefore the self, among girls¹⁶.

Purpose of the study: to assess the

knowledge, feeling, attitude, and behavior of women and girls regarding menstruation.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

the study design was combined qualitative and quantitative methods in an exploratory design among different ages of women from different areas.

Setting: this study was carried out in two urban areas namely Shebein Elkom and Quesina and 10 rural areas from Menofeiya Governorate.

Sample: A convenient sample comprised 1023 women aged between 20-45 years, single and married women, educated and none educated from urban and rural areas. sample size from total population in Menoufiya is 3.06 according to 1- Sudman, Seymour. 1976. Applied sampling. New York: Academic Press. 2- Yamane, Taro. 1967. Statistics, An introductory Analysis, 2nd ed. New York: Harper & Row (sample size for $\pm 3\%$, $\pm 5\%$, $\pm 7\%$ and $\pm 10\%$ precision levels where confidence level is 95% & $P= 0.5$)

Tools: interview schedule sheet was developed and included items related to: 1- Socio-demographic characteristics of women, e.g., age, education, residence. 2- Questions related to knowledge about menstruation as activity during it, source of knowledge. 3- Items about women's feeling toward menstruation and their reaction when watching advertising (ads) for sanitary napkins with other gender. 4- Questions about their attitude toward menstruation: positive attitude as benefit of menstruation. 5- Questions about attitude toward menstruation: positive attitude as benefit of menstruation. Attitude scoring were 1% - > 50% (negative attitude) 50%- 100% (positive attitude). The scoring system was developed by a jury of experts of educational psychology & psychiatry. **Methods:** after taking the personal approval, each woman or girl was interviewed individually to collect the necessary information. The tool was assessed for content validity and test-retest

reliability. Procedure: data were collected from homes, home visits, and faculties through interviews with student' girls' during the academic year (September 2004 to September 2005) using the interview methods.

Statistical Analysis:

The collected data were summarized using frequency and percentage for quantitative and qualitative variables. It was performed using the SPSS software package. Frequency distributions were calculated with cross tabulation for the study of the relation between variables. Percentages were compared using Chi-Square test. The threshold of significance was fixed at 0.05 levels.

RESULTS

Regarding the age of the studied subject it was founded that the highest percentage 52.5% were around age 20- <30 while the lowest percentage 3% were around age 40 and more with statistical significance at 0.041 between urban and

rural subject. According to education, 46% of the studied subjects were secondary education while only 5 % were illiterate with highly significance difference between rural and urban subject. Forty three percent had university education with statistical significance between rural and urban subjects.

Forty one of the studied samples discuss their menstruation with their family member while the minority (2%) discusses menstruation with their relatives. There was statistical significance at 0.008 between the different levels of education among the subject.

Regarding feeling of the study sample about 66.4% of them had something dirty and unclean about women during menstruation with statistical significance between age group among the studied sample.

The majority of studied subjects (81%) think that couple should stop their sexual intercourse during menstruation with

statistical significance among different levels of education.

Regarding the causes of stopping their sexual intercourse among the couple during menstruation about 67.3% of the studied sample thinking that it is illegal. While 12.3% related fear of spread of sexual diseases with statistical significance between different levels of education.

Only 19% of the studied sample had positive attitude about menstruation while the majority 65% did not had any positive attitude about menstruation with statistical

significance between different levels of education among the studied sample.

The majority of the studied sample (82%) express feeling of shyness when see television talks about sanitary napkins with statistical significance between rural and urban residence.

The majority of the studied sample (38%) did not give any comment when they see television advertisement talking about sanitary napkins on the front of other gender. While 2% only feel anxious with statistical significance between urban and rural residence.

Table (1): Distribution of the sample according to General Characteristics

	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Age						
>20	43	32.0	350	39.5	393	33.85
20-30	84	63.0	453	51	537	52.5
30-40	3	2.0	58	6.5	61	6
40 and more	4	3	28	3	32	3
Subject's Education						
Illiterate	4	3	50	5.5	54	5
Reading& writing	6	4.5	58	6.5	64	6
High school	49	36.5	450	47	469	46
University	75	56	361	41	436	43
Total	134	100	889	100	1023	100

Test of significance: $\chi^2 = 0.009$ (significant)

Table (2): Distribution of the sample according to source of knowledge about menstruation and their education.

Source of knowledge	Illiterate		Reading & writing		High school		University		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Friends	14	26	15	23	132	28	120	27.5	281	27.5
Mother/Sister	28	52	34	54	210	44.5	150	34.4	422	41.4
Teacher	0	0	2	3	44	9	58	13.3	104	10.2
Audiovisual	11	20	13	20	76	16	104	24	204	20
Nothing	1	2	0	0	7	1.5	4	0.9	12	1.2
Total	54		64		469		436		1023	

Test of significance: $X^2= 0.001$ (significant)

Table (3): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their education and attitude in relation to menstruation

Women education	Illiterate		Reading & writing		High school		University		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Attitude</u>										
Positive	471	83	175	77.5	140	78.3	41	82	827	81
Negative	9	1.5	7	3	3	1.7	2	4	21	2
Don't know	88	15.5	44	19.5	36	20	7	14	175	17
Total	568	100	226	100	179	100	50	100	1023	100

Test of significance: $X^2 =0.568$ (significant)

Table (4): Distribution of the sample regarding causes to stop their sexual intercourse in relation to their education.

Causes to stop their sexual intercourse	Illiterate		Reading & writing		High school		university		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
*Illegal	405	71	141	62	110	61.5	33	66	689	67.3
*spread of sexual disease	61	11	30	13	29	16.2	6	12	126	12.3
*Don't know	93	16.4	44	20	38	21.2	9	18	184	18
*Difficult & pain	5	0.9	7	3	1	0.6	1	2	14	1.4
*Man can't wait	4	0.4	4	2	1	0.6	1	2	10	1
Total	568	100	226	100	179	100	50	100	1023	100

Test of significance: $X^2=0.271$ (significant)

Table (5): Distribution of the studied sample according to their residence and feeling in relation to advertising of napkins in television.

Residence Feeling	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Shy	119	89	720	81	839	82
Easy (nothing)	15	11	169	19	184	18
Total	134	100	889	100	1023	100

Test of significance: $X^2=0.159$ (significant)

Table (6): Distribution of the women reaction related to observation on watching sanitary napkins on T.V in front of male.

Residence	Urban		Rural		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Change channel	34	25	223	25	257	25
No comment	53	40	335	38	388	38
Leave the place	31	23	179	20	210	20.5
Anxious	1	0.7	22	2.5	23	2
Easy	15	11.3	13	14.5	145	14.5
Total	134	100	889	100	1023	100

Test of significance: $X^2=0.665$ (significant)

Table (7): Distribution of the studied sample according to feeling in relation to advertising of napkins in television with different age.

Age Feeling	(>20)		(20-)		(30-)		(40&more)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Shy	331	84	446	83.1	42	70	20	62.5	839	82
Easy(nothing)	63	16	91	16.9	18	30	12	37.5	184	18
Total	394	100	537	100	60	100	32	100	1023	100

Test of significance: (Insignificant)

Table (8): Distribution of the studied sample regarding their opinions about uncleanness of women during menstruation.

Age	(-<20)		(20-)		(30-)		(40&more)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
opinions during menstruation										
Dirty	256	65	356	66	44	72	23	72	679	66.4
Not dirty	129	33	173	32	17	28	9	28	328	32
Something	5	103	7	1.5	0	0	0	0	12	1.2
Don't know	3	0.7	1	0.5	0	0	0	0	4	0.4
Total	393	100	537	100	61	100	32	100	1023	100

Test of significance: $X^2=0.957$ (significant)

Table (9): Distribution of the studied samples regarding their opinions about stop sexual intercourse and their age.

Age	(-<20)		(20-)		(30-)		(40&more)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Sexual behavior										
Change	287	72.8	461	85.8	54	90	25	78.1	827	80.8
Not change	0	0	14	2.6	3	5	4	12.5	21	2.1
Don't know	107	27.2	62	11.5	3	5	3	9.4	175	17.1
Total	394	100	537	100	60	100	32	100	1023	100

Test of significance: (significant)

Table (10): Distribution of the studied Sample regarding women feeling toward menstruation with their age

Age	(-<20)		(20-)		(30-)		(40&more)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Bad luck	222	56.3	340	63.3	36	60	14	43.8	612	59.8
Good luck	172	43.7	197	36.7	24	40	18	56.2	411	40.2
Total	394	100	537	100	60	100	32	100	1023	100

Test of significance: (insignificant)

Table (11): Distribution of the studied sample according to their positive attitude toward menstruation regarding their age

Age	(<20)		(20-)		(30-)		(40&more)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
positive	75	19	104	19.4	10	16.7	3	9.4	192	18.8
negative	262	66.5	339	63.1	42	70	26	81.2	669	65.4
Don't know	57	14.5	94	17.5	8	13.3	3	9.4	162	15.8
Total	394	100	537	100	60	100	32	100	1023	100

Test of significance: (significant)

DISCUSSION

Many girls and women internalize the menstruation is something dirty, something to be ashamed of, and most importantly hidden¹⁰. So certain women reported variation of anxiety levels during menstruation¹⁹. The present study reflects that two-thirds of the studied sample had bad luck and had some physical problems with menstruation from urban and rural areas with different ages and different levels of education.

This result is supported by other studies²⁰ that reported that most of women had negative feeling and suffered from physical problems regarding menstruation. Also retrospective and prospective study¹⁹,

reflected that women menstruation had high anxiety sensitivity and more severe menstrual symptoms. Other study²¹ mentioned that most of girls and women who had menstruation had more distress and painful menstrual symptoms.

The main source of knowledge and information of this study were family members (as mother, sisters, and other relative). In other studies, the girls found the need to discuss this topic with own friends. This difference was found for changing believes and habits and also for the mother and daughter involve reciprocal in which each influences the other beliefs and both affected by their individual

experience. This belief held by the daughter that her mother experienced negative reactions to menstruation, may cause the daughter to anticipate or experience these negative reactions, that lead to more serious problems¹⁰.

Other study²² revealed that the girls preferred to obtain this knowledge or to find a forum in which to discuss their situation with other girls who has similar experience. The present study mentioned that with increasing women's age, it was found that the women's feeling was good luck and no shyness feeling toward__advertising of napkins in television. Also decreasing positive attitude toward menstruation. Other study revealed that, younger Mexican women, viewed menstruation as requiring less secrecy than did the middle aged woman, and were less likely than older women to view menstruation as having proscription and prescriptions²³. Also other study²⁴ reported that American women scored significantly higher than

Indian women on knowledge test, and also reported that they had better preparation for menarche than Indian women did. However, Indian women scored significantly positive higher than American women on the attitude subscales.

In relation to change sexual activity among couples during menstruation, the present study revealed that above two-thirds of the subjects change their activities thinking that it is illegal.

CONCLUSION

All knowledge about menstruation was taken from family members. Women felt bad luck for having menstruation. They avoid sexual act during menstruation to illegal and to prevent sexual transmitted diseases. They had negative attitudes toward menstruation. They express feeling of shyness when see television talk about sanitary napkins.

RECOMMENDAIONS

- Girls should be prepared for menstruation through health team care.

- Counseling technique should apply for women with physiological and psychological problem during menstruation.

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