KNOWLEDGE AND MENSTRUAL HYGIENE PRACTICE AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ILE-IFE, SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA


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Abstract: The culture of silence surrounds menstruation while inadequate facilities predispose adolescents to psycho-social trauma and cyclic absenteeism from schools. This study assessed the knowledge and menstrual hygiene management (MHM) practices among adolescents. The descriptive cross-sectional study identified 400 respondents through multistage technique. Data was collected by pre-tested questionnaire and observational checklist. The mean age of respondents was 15.3±1.5 years and the age at menarche was 12.8 years. Most respondents (70%) were between 10-15 years. Many respondents, (296(74%) had good knowledge and were aware about menstruation before menarche (85.4%). Their MHM knowledge was associated with; mothers education (p=0.029); the frequency of changing absorbents (p=0.003) and age at menarche (p=0.001). The absorbents used daily was 2.5±0.7 and 90% changes absorbents at least, twice daily while 24.2% had previously changed it in school. However, 14.4% respondents abstained from school during menstruation and association exist between the school-type and, menstrual absorbents used (p=0.0001); mothers education (p=0.0001) and disposal of used absorbents (p=0.004), respectively. Moreover, spent absorbents were disposed, mostly through pit latrine (35.1%) and burning (32.6 %). Wide disparity remains between good MHM knowledge and existing poor practices. Therefore, gender friendly facilities should be provided in schools to increase retention of girls and remove the psycho-social trauma during menstruation.

Keywords: In-school adolescents, menarche, menstrual hygiene, gender-friendly MHM facilities, Nigeria.