Awareness and health seeking behaviour of adolescent school girls on menstrual and reproductive health problems

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ABSTRACT
The transition from childhood to adulthood occurs during adolescence period which is characterized by major biological changes like physical growth, sexual maturation and psycho-social development. During this phase of growth the girls first experience menstruation and related problems which is marked by feelings of anxiety and eagerness to know about this natural phenomenon. The study was conducted to assess the health problems, to evaluate health seeking behaviour to find the awareness about pregnancy among them and the awareness about reproductive health among them. The study was conducted on the girls age group (14 – 18) in Banasthali University located in Tonk district of Rajasthan. The study subjects were 100 girl students of 9th – 12th classes. Majority of them (82.5%) attained menarche at 13-14 years. Regarding mensturation, 84 per cent girls perceived it to be a normal process while 16 per cent girls felt that it was abnormal. Commonest reported menstrual problem was dysmenorrhoea (67%) followed by irregular menses (4%) of which only 6.2 per cent consulted doctor and 20.3 per cent, took ever the counter medications from the chemist shops. Knowledge about normal duration of pregnancy was good and need for extra food during pregnancy was poor. Most of the girls knew about importance, duration of child spacing and need for three medical examinations during pregnancy. Major sources of information were television (10.2%), radio (13.3%), peer group (24.3%) and mothers (52.2%). Girls preferred to consult parents (59.2%) and doctors (34.6%) for help at times of having reproductive health problems. The study highlights the need for educating school girls about adolescent health, pregnancy and reproductive health problems through schools and ‘parents by the health professionals.

KEY WORDS : Health seeking behaviour, Physical growth, Adolescence


Article chronicle: Received: 16.05.2011; Revised: 10.09.2011; Accepted: 20.10.2011