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RESEARCH PAPER

OPEN ACCESS

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN RURAL POPULATION OF VARANASI, UTTAR PRADESH: A SURVEY

REEMA SINGH¹ AND SWETA SINGH²

ABSTRACT

The developing world has 84 per cent of the world's adolescent population. There are an estimated 200 million adolescents in India who comprise one-fifth of the total Indian population. As many as 40-45 per cent of the adolescent girls reports menstrual problems. The specific objectives of the study were: To study the reproductive health of adolescent girls in the Rural population of Varanasi. A cross sectional study was conducted in Rural Varanasi in which 108 adolescent girls, aged 15-19 year were interviewed. Analysis of data revealed that 37% girls know about menarche. 43.8 % adolescent girls think that period disturb thier life or polluted environment. 5.6% girls had problems of discharge from vagina. 3.7% adolescent girl had problem of foul smell from discharge. 11.1% Adolescent girls had knowledge about safe sex. .So in Rural area adolescent girls had less knowledge about reproductive health and had problem related reproductive health.

KEY WORDS:

Adolescent Girl, Reproductive Health, Nutrition, Awareness.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined adolescence as the age group of 10-19 years. Adolescence in India has been defined to be a period between 10-18 years. Lately, the girls in the age of 11-18 years have been included in the national adolescent girls scheme under integrated child development scheme (ICDS) (Indian Journal of Public

Health,-2004). The needs of adolescents vary with their sex, stage of development as mentioned above, the life circumstances and the socio-economic conditions of their environment. Adolescents learn about reproductive health and sexual matters by observing the behaviour of the adults around them, by listening to peers and the older siblings, through the media in all its forms and by acquiring the knowledge of parents

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or other trusted mentors (Washington D.C.-2005) Adolescents' problems constitute a bulk of morbidities which are generally unrecognized and uncared furthering the disease burden. A large variety of morbidities such as nutritional deficiency disorders (stunting, wasting), menstrual disorders, etc. prevail among adolescents. RTIs/STIs/HIV/AIDS have already appeared as serious problems. Teenage pregnancies with complications, unsafe abortions, etc. also exist considerably. Moreover, the complex psychosocial morbidities and high risk behaviour of adolescents have been recognized as a threat to survival, growth and development¹. Hospital-based retrospective studies in India show that primary amenorrhoea, thyroid disorders, genital anomalies, ovarian enlargement, menstrual disorders, leucorrhoea and genital infections are very common among adolescent girls (Swati Y. Bhave.) The lives of these girls are characterized by limited education, lack of knowledge pertaining to social as well as health aspects and also limited influence on decisions affecting their lives.

OBJECTIVE

To study the reproductive health of adolescent girls in the Rural population of Varanasi.

METHODOLOGY

A cross sectional study was conducted among Adolescent girls aged 15-19 year. 108 Adolescent girls interviewed by using interview schedule to assess their reproductive health. The study conducted in rural area of Varanasi. A detailed information on Socio-demographic profile was collected with the help of pretested semi-structured questionnaire. Questionnaire was develop

based on parameters and pretested before use. Weight and height was done by using standardised technique. The data was collected, tabulated and analyzed with help of Microsoft excel 2007 and SPSS 16th version.

RESULT

Cross sectional study conducted on 108 adolescent girls in the age group of 15-19 years and after interview it was found that:

- (1) 37% girls know about menarche.
- (2) 43.8 % adolescent girls think that period disturb their life or polluted environment.
- (3) 5.6% girls had problem of discharge from vagina and 3.7% adolescent girl had problem of foul smell from discharge.
- (4) 83.3% Adolescent girls know about HIV/AIDS.
- (5) 63.3 % Adolescent girls had knowledge about the place where test and treatment of HIV/ AIDS is available.
- (6) 35.2% Adolescent girls know about the various family planning methods.
- (7) TABLE-1 shows that 10.2 % adolescent girls say that it is not important to talk about sexual issues. 40.7 % adolescent girls say that it is important to talk about sexual issues. 5.6 % adolescent girls say that they would like to talk more about sexual issues. 12 % adolescent girls say that there are many things i don't know about sexual issues and 31.5 % adolescent girls don't think about sexual issues.
- (8) 11.1% Adolescent girls had knowledge about safe sex.
- (9) TABLE-2 shows that 17.6 % adolescent girls know that physical change occurs during adolescent period of life. 3.7 % adolescent girls think that emotional change occurs during adolescent period of life. .9 adolescent girls say that sex feeling

occurs during adolescent period of life. 2.9 adolescent girls say that plans for future feel occurs during adolescent period of life. 71.3 % adolescent girls say that menstruation occurs during adolescent period of life and 3.7 % adolescent girls don't know about changes during adolescent period of life.

DISCUSSION

It was observed that 72.1 per cent of the study subjects had attained menarche with a mean age of 13.16 years which is comparable to 13.5 years and 13.7 years as reported in studies conducted earlier by Hegde et al. In this study it was found that 37% girls know about menarche. 29.6 per cent of the girls had knowledge about contraception of which 76.6 per cent were aware of oral contraceptive pills (OCPs) which was lower than the figures reported by Acharya et al and In this study only 11.1% Adolescent girls had knowledge about safe sex. 27 per cent of the girls who had one or the other symptoms of RTI of which white discharge and pain in the lower abdomen was 41 per cent each (Majumdar et al) and this study 5.6% girls had problem of discharge from vagina and 3.7% adolescent girl had problem of foul smell from discharge.lack of knowledge pertaining to social as well as health aspects and also limited influence on decisions affecting their lives. Thus, awareness is one major factor for development of this group of population because of the fact that these adolescent girls would be the future housewives.

CONCLUSION

To sum up all these observations among 15-19 adolescent girls of rural Varanasi revealed a positive relationship between illiteracy and lack of awareness. So in Rural

area adolescent girls had less knowledge about reproductive health and had problems related reproductive health.

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Table 1: Distribution of awareness about sex issues of Adolescent Girls in rural varanasi

	Frequency	Percent
It is not important	11	10.2
It is important	44	40.7
I would like to talk more about it	6	5.6
There are many things i don't know	13	12.0
Don't think	34	31.5
Total	108	100.0

Table 2: Distribution of knowledge about the changes during adolescent period of life of Adolescent girls in rural varanasi

	Frequency	Percent
Physical Change	19	17.6
Emotional Change	4	3.7
Sex Feeling	1	.9
Plans for Future	3	2.8
Menstruation	77	71.3
Don't know	4	3.7
Total	108	100.0