

Original Research Article

The Beliefs and Attitudes of the Experience of Menstruation in Female Students at the University of Lahore

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Abstract

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Menstruation is a physical phenomenon related with reproductive function. The word "menstruation" is derived from the Italian word "menses" meaning moon, which also lasts about 28 days with reference to the lunar cycle. Its onset fundamentally alters the life of a young woman. In the entire world, menstruation has always been influenced by multiple perceptions. The objective of this study is to identify the beliefs and attitudes of the experience of menstruation among female students. A descriptive cross sectional study was done. Students who were full time participants of class, enrolled in their subjects, present students and those that were willing to participate in this study by signing consent were included. The students that were not willing to participate and those absent from class were excluded in this study. Sample size of n=150 undergraduate students of the nursing department were taken by using convenient sampling. 5 point Likert scale base self-administered questionnaire was used for collection of data. Human subject protection was made sure throughout the study by keeping participants identity confidential. Data were analyzed using software SPSS (statistical package for social science studies) version 21. Results were reported and there were important relations between a particular population and the level of confidentiality as well as preparedness level and level of comfort, discomfort and impairment menstruation-associated. Results have also shown substantial variations between regular menarche on the degree of impairment related to menstruation and late onset. The findings of this study have shown that female students have ample information from their mother and family about menstruation. They know it is upsetting their lives, but it's important for women's lives. They think of it as the feminine aspect of life. Pakistani girls feel insecure about communicating with others about menstruation.

Keywords: Attitudes, Beliefs, Menstruation, Female Students

INTRODUCTION

Puberty is the indication of rapid hormonal changes and sexual buildup. In this pubertal time period, intellectual, mental, hormonal and as well as physical changes take place in our body having different variety. It all happened because of environmental, balanced diet and genetics. (Fatumbi, 2017). Juvenility is harbinger for teenagers transformation to females. The monthlies have 3 stages; the (secretory) phases are stepped by hormones. At different stages of life the, length of monthlies have

different duration, it may last 3 to 7 days in different bodies. As a result, the flow of bleeding during the days of the month is called monthlies. However we want to deal with it with grace.

One fourth of the world's population is female in condition of reproduction and majority of them will get monthlies on a regular basis. The period in the life of a female preceding the establishment of menstruation including other changes like physical (growth), state of

mind and emotions lasting up to the second decade of human life (Aburshaid, 2017).

Puberty is a well defined term when girls' roles changes into adult roles; there are different occurrences of change like dressing, personal manner, aptitude, coaching and adjustability (transportability) (Dolan et al., 2014; Mason et al., 2013; Mmari et al., 2016).

The menstrual cycle is an intellectual procedure which is ultimately associated with the capability to reproduce. Its impact has deeply changed a young woman's life. In the whole world, monthlies have faced different ambiguities. In the current days, there are some opponents regarding monthlies, but the difference reflects their thoughts towards menstruation in different parts of the world. Dissimilarity was found between countries, traditions, religions and moral philosophy (Thakur, 2014).

In third world countries, our females have to undergo so many restrictions about moving and behavior due to fear of being pollutant. In other sections of the world, monthlies are still associated with so many cultural prohibitions as well as icons of shame and dirtiness. Even in a few fashion world, it is undisclosed between a mother and daughters in many families. In India, it is investigated (treated as a god gifted element or natural happenings). A monthlies' girl is not permitted to enter the temple, cooking meals and to attend weddings etc. It is all about lack of knowledge among young women in India in various conditions of menarche. It normally guides unnecessary fear, restrictions and offensive routine (Mahon and Fernandes, 2010)

Adolescence menarche or 1st stay of menstruation has a very important role and cultural achievement for young girls. Meanwhile there are many contradictions in western society. How the young girls feel about their monthlies is also an important factor. The U.S girls who got caught early in the menstruation cycle compared herself to their peers and searched for short positive attitudes rather than find more worries about monthlies on time or late maturing peers (Ge and Natsuaki, 2009). The Chinese reflected their confirmed theory about reproductive health. For the stability of body or retain health, Chinese think their herbal medicine and food have better results to regulate the monthlies. The monthly symptom in Chinese theory is different between blood and Qi kind of blood vitality. They also linked it with discernment in general health of women. So, the women engross herbal remedies to build up their Qi and health and reproduction. They are not in favor of eating cold food and drinks and suggest taking more rest to fill up their Qi during the periods (Tang et al., 2013).

Significance

This research will allow students to look for menstruation values and behaviors.

a. This study will disrupt the quietness of monthly management beliefs and practices through increasing consciousness of the subject or its influence on women and teenagers, discovering and receiving education on organization features and supporting the incorporation of menstrual hygiene products into health and hand promoting integration in health and hygiene/life orientation strategies.

b. This study will provide information to reinforce preventive services that support the health and knowledge of women.

c. This research would contribute to the current body of expertise in menstruation beliefs and practices.

d. It opens the door for other researchers to perform studies on menstruation attitudes and behaviors at other universities.

e. Ultimately, this study will act as a reference material for prospective researchers planning to perform research directly relevant to this research. A lot of data can be obtained from this work and can also be further enhanced.

AIM

The main aim of the study is to discover the current attitudes and belief surrounding menstruation among medical students at University of Lahore and identify any educational gaps in the University's medical program regarding this topic

Research Objectives

1. To identify the attitudes of the understanding of menstruation among female students.
2. To examine the beliefs of the experience of menstruation among female students.

Research question

. What is the student's attitude/ beliefs regarding the experience of menstruation?

Study Design

For this study, a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study strategy was used to classify students' beliefs and attitudes about menstrual experiences.

Descriptive study explains what happens and can help to discover new details and definitions. The qualitative analysis is intended to obtain further knowledge on features within a particular area of study (Fox and Bayat, 2007).

Study Population

The site is the overall location for the research. It could be an entire community, entire setup. The study site was the University of Lahore New Campus.

Study Setting

Setting of the study was The Allied Health Sciences Department like Department of Lahore School of Nursing.

Target population

Target populations were the students of The University of Lahore from Allied Health Sciences Departments like Lahore school of Nursing. The total study population was 240 students approximately.

Sample size

Slovin's sampling formula was used to find the sample size of the study population.

If the total population is 240

If $N = \text{Population}$, $n = \text{Sample size}$, $E = \text{Margin of error}$

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (N)(E)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{240}{1 + (240)(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{240}{1 + (240)(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{240}{1 + 0.6}$$

$$n = \frac{240}{1.6}$$

$$n = 150$$

So the study sample was the 150 students.

Sampling Method

A convenient sampling method was used for this study. It was the easiest and the most convenient method of recruiting the sources of the primary data for research.

Data Collection Plan

One of the main sources for data collection is the data collection strategy. To gather data from the study participants, a self-administered questionnaire was used. Authorization has been received from the class, teachers and students. Time and a free hand were provided to complete it and return it.

Research tool

A close-ended questionnaire, Likert's scale was used to

assess students' attitudes and beliefs about menstrual experience. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: the first part explains the consent form and the demographic data of the students whose title, age, semester or department name are present; and the second part explains the demographic data and the second part of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done by SPSS version 21. The study was descriptive cross-sectional study. All the descriptive statistics were obtained through the SPSS software. Percentage, Frequency, Mean, Median and Standard Deviation was implemented for data analysis.

Ethical consideration

Approval was taken from Ethical Review Board Committee of The University of Lahore and relevant Head of Department (HOD) by the way of permission letter from the department of Lahore School of Nursing for conducting this research. Sufficient amounts of information of research were provided to participants with the help of permission and this was achieved through a consent form attached on the top of the questionnaire. Permission was taken from all the participants. Free hands were given to the participants to take part in the study or refused to participate. Participants have also the right to mention their names or not. Confidentiality was reflected on by informing participants. Data of the participants will be useful only for research purpose. The right of participants was protected by Nuremberg Code of Ethics.

Time Framework

The Study was taken approximately 3-4 month, from September 2020 to December 2020.

Descriptive Statistics

The table 1 below showed the demographic characteristics of participants in which age, education and age at first menstruation were included. There were 67 (44.7%) respondents with age 18-22 years, 55(36.7%) with age 23-27 years, 20(13.3%) with age 28-32 years and 8(5.3%) with age above 32 years old. There were 105(70%) participants that were doing Bachelor degrees and 45 (30%) were masters students. The participants' age at first menstruation were 11-15 years of total 134(89.3%) and 16-20 years 16(10.7) students.

Table 1. Demographic Analysis

		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	18-22 years	67	44.7
	23-27 Years	55	36.7
	28-32 Years	20	13.3
	Above 32 Years	8	5.3
	Total	150	100%
Education	Bachelors	105	70.0
	Masters	45	30.0
	Total	150	100%
Age at first Menstruation	11-15Years	134	89.3
	16-20Years	16	10.7
	Total	150	100%

Table 2. Preparedness

Sr#	Questions	Totally Unprepared f(%age)	Somewhat Unprepared f(%age)	Somewhat Prepared f(%age)	Totally Prepared f(%age)	Total f(%age)
1	How prepared do you think you were for your first menstruation?	72(48.0%)	44(29.3%)	17(11.3%)	17(11.3%)	150 (100%)
		No Information f(%age)	Very Little Information f (%age)	Enough Basic Information f (%age)	Extremely Well Informed f (%age)	Total f(%age)
2	How much information did you have prior to your first menstruation?	56(37.3%)	49(32.7%)	38(25.3%)	7(4.7%)	150 (100%)

The above table 2 describes the perspectives of 150 students regarding preparedness of the female students towards menstruation. "How prepared do you think you were for your first menstruation" that is 48.0% (n=72) respondents were completely unprepared, 29.3% (n=44) were slightly unprepared, 11.3% (n=17) were slightly prepared, and 11.3% (n=17) were completely prepared with this statement. "How much information did you have prior to your first menstruation" that is 37.3% (n=56) respondents had no information, 32.7% (n=49) had very little information, 25.3% (n=38) had sufficient basic information, and 4.7% (n=7) were very well informed with this statement.

The below table 3 describes the perspectives of 150 students regarding beliefs and attitudes of the experience of menstruation "Is it necessary to have conversation about menstrual period with men" that is 22.0% (n=33) respondents strongly disagreed, 20.0% (n=30) disagreed, 30.7% (n=46) were neutral, 18.0% (n=27) Agreed and 9.3% (n=14) Strongly agreed with this statement. "Should women be proud when they have periods" that is 5.3% (n=8) of respondents strongly disagree, 24.7% (n=37) disagreed, 35.3% (n=53) were neutral, 24.7% (n=37) agreed and 10.0% (n=15)

strongly agree with this statement.

Results showed that the perspectives of 150 students regarding Beliefs and Attitudes towards Menstruation "The topic of periods at school with boys and girls, is it important to discuss with them?" 19.3% (n=29) respondents strongly disagreed, 23.3% (n=35) disagreed, 19.3% (n=29) were neutral, 24.7% (n=37) agreed and 13.3% (n=20) strongly agreed with this statement. "The period is dirty" 15.3% (n=23) respondents Strongly disagree, 19.3% (n=29) disagreed, 24.0% (n=36) were neutral, 26.7% (n=36) agreed and 14.7% (n=22) strongly agreed with this statement. "When women are having periods, they should take care about eating and drinking" 6.0% (n=9) respondents strongly disagree, 7.3% (n=11) disagreed, 19.3% (n=29) were neutral, 35.3% (n=53) Agreed and 32.0% (n=48) strongly agree with this statement.

Results of the study shows the perspectives of 150 students regarding Beliefs and Attitudes towards Menstruation "It is a great advantage for men that they have no idea about the annoyance of the period" that is 10.7% (n=16) respondents strongly disagreed, 18.0% (n=27) Disagreed, 26.0% (n=39) were neutral, 28.7% (n=43) agreed and 16.7% (n=25) strongly agree with this

Table 3. Beliefs and attitudes of the experience of menstruation

Sr#	Questions	Strongly Disagree f(%age)	Disagree f(%age)	Neutral f(%age)	Agree f(%age)	Strongly Agree f(%age)	Total f(%age)
1	It is important to talk about the menstrual period with men?	33(22.0%)	30(22.0%)	46(30.7%)	27(18.0%)	14(9.3%)	150(100%)
2	I think there are times when we women cannot stand our periods?	7(4.7%)	33(22.0%)	56(37.3%)	41(27.3%)	13(8.7%)	150(100%)
3	Women are proud when we start having our periods?	8(5.3%)	37(24.7%)	53(35.3%)	37(24.7%)	15(10.0%)	150(100%)
4	It is important to discuss the topic of periods at school with boys and girls?	29(19.3%)	35(23.3%)	29(19.3%)	37(24.7%)	20(13.3%)	150(100%)
5	The period is dirty?	23(15.3%)	29(19.3%)	36(24.0%)	40(26.7%)	22(14.7%)	150(100%)
6	Women must avoid eating or drinking cold things when we are having our periods?	9(6.0%)	11(7.3%)	29(19.3%)	53(35.3%)	48(32.0%)	150(100%)
7	Men have a great advantage not having the annoyance of the period?	16(10.7%)	27(18.0%)	39(26.0%)	43(28.7%)	25(16.7%)	150(100%)
8	We women must hide anything that shows that we are having our periods?	4(2.7%)	26(17.3%)	40(26.7%)	64(42.7%)	16(10.7%)	150(100%)
9	The period affects the performance of women at work?	9(6.0%)	26(17.3%)	28(18.7%)	55(36.7%)	32(21.3%)	150(100%)
10	We women wish that the period would last for a few minutes?	11(7.3%)	33(22.0%)	41(27.3%)	33(22.0%)	32(21.3%)	150(100%)
11	It is important to buy sanitary pads without being seen?	16(10.7%)	40(26.7%)	34(22.7%)	25(16.7%)	35(23.3%)	150(100%)
12	There are women who feel more content to have our periods?	10(6.7%)	41(27.3%)	42(28.0%)	36(24.0%)	21(14.0%)	150(100%)
13	Women wish that we did not have our periods?	11(7.3%)	46(30.7%)	50(33.3%)	28(18.7%)	15(10.0%)	150(100%)
14	It is uncomfortable for us women to talk about our periods?	12(8.0%)	42(28.0%)	32(21.3%)	47(31.3%)	17(11.3%)	150(100%)
15	There are women who are happy every time they have their periods?	20(13.3%)	39(26.0%)	41(27.3%)	34(22.7%)	16(10.7%)	150(100%)
16	It is important that nobody knows when a woman is having her period?	14(9.3%)	25(16.7%)	52(34.7%)	41(27.3%)	18(12.0%)	150(100%)
17	Women must avoid smoking while we are having our periods?	9(6.0%)	19(12.7%)	46(30.7%)	50(33.3%)	26(17.3%)	150(100%)
18	The period is annoying 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28 29 30. It is uncomfortable for us women to have our periods	10(6.7%)	27(18.0%)	54(36.0%)	33(22.0%)	26(17.3%)	150(100%)
19	Women must avoid eating certain foods while we are having our periods	11(7.3%)	33(22.0%)	27(18.0%)	58(38.7%)	21(14.0%)	150(100%)
20	It is embarrassing when a man finds out that a woman is having her period	19(12.7%)	26(17.3%)	50(33.3%)	37(24.7%)	18(12.0%)	150(100%)
21	Women must drink tea while we are having our periods	10(6.7%)	28(18.7%)	30(20.0%)	57(38.0%)	25(16.7%)	150(100%)
22	The period is painful	8(5.3%)	15(10.0%)	32(21.3%)	57(38.0%)	38(25.3%)	150(100%)
23	Women blush when we see an advertisement about sanitary pads when we are with a man	12(8.0%)	30(20.0%)	37(24.7%)	36(24.0%)	35(23.3%)	150(100%)
24	The period disables women	19(12.7%)	37(24.7%)	35(23.3%)	33(22.0%)	26(17.3%)	150(100%)
25	There are women who enjoy having their periods	22(14.7%)	45(30.0%)	42(28.0%)	27(18.0%)	14(9.3%)	150(100%)
26	Women must avoid carrying heavy things when we are having our periods	15(10.0%)	35(23.3%)	43(28.7%)	37(24.7%)	20(13.3%)	150(100%)
27	There are women who look more attractive while they are having their periods	18(12.0%)	38(25.3%)	39(26.0%)	43(28.7%)	12(8.0%)	150(100%)

Table 3. Continue

28	Women must take showers with hot water while we are having our periods?	16(10.7%)	41(27.3%)	37(24.7%)	42(28.0%)	14(9.3%)	150(100%)
29	We women should avoid talking about our periods when men are around?	18(12.0%)	32(21.3%)	45(30.0%)	36(24.0%)	19(12.7%)	150(100%)
30	The period is a big problem?	19(12.7%)	28(18.7%)	44(29.3%)	39(26.0%)	20(13.3%)	150(100%)
31	Women must avoid exercising while we are having our periods?	16(10.7%)	32(21.3%)	47(31.3%)	41(27.3%)	14(9.3%)	150(100%)
32	The period is something that we women have to bear?	11(7.3%)	29(19.3%)	36(24.0%)	57(38.0%)	17(11.3%)	150(100%)
33	Women get excited when we have our first period?	21(14.0%)	19(12.7%)	39(26.0%)	53(35.3%)	18(12.0%)	150(100%)
34	The period affects a woman's ability to do housework?	15(10.0%)	38(25.3%)	34(22.7%)	40(26.7%)	23(15.3%)	150(100%)
35	It is hard to live with the period?	13(8.7%)	34(22.7%)	40(26.7%)	43(28.7%)	20(13.3%)	150(100%)
36	It is important to discuss the topic of the period at home openly?	8(5.3%)	32(21.3%)	43(28.7%)	45(30.0%)	22(14.7%)	150(100%)
37	Having the period is a punishment for women?	23(15.3%)	36(24.0%)	39(26.0%)	36(24.0%)	16(10.7%)	150(100%)
38	It is annoying for us women to have the period every month?	22(14.7%)	36(24.0%)	49(32.7%)	28(18.7%)	15(10.0%)	150(100%)
39	The period affects women's daily activities?	7(4.7%)	29(19.3%)	49(32.7%)	42(28.0%)	23(15.3%)	150(100%)
40	The period is really annoying?	5(3.3%)	32(21.3%)	41(27.3%)	54(36.0%)	18(12.0%)	150(100%)
41	Women must stay away from men while we are having our periods?	22(14.7%)	32(21.3%)	35(23.3%)	32(21.3%)	29(19.3%)	150(100%)

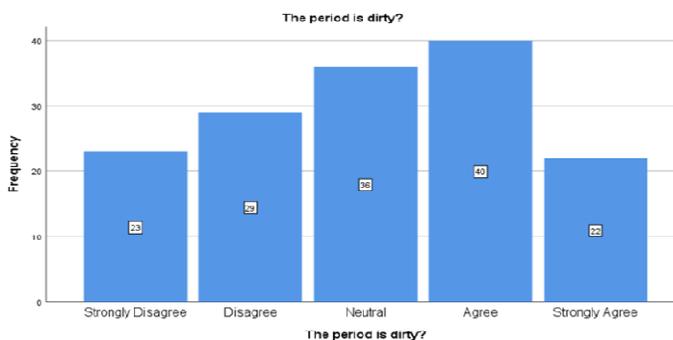


Figure 1. The period is dirty?

statement. Women have wished that the period should last for a few minutes" 7.3% (n=11) of respondents strongly disagreed, 22.0% (n=33) disagreed, 27.3% (n=41) were neutral, 22.0% (n=33) Agreed and 21.3% (n=32) strongly agreed with this statement. "Conversation about periods is uncomfortable for women" 8.0% (n=12) of respondents strongly disagreed, 28.0% (n=42) disagreed, 21.3% (n=32) were neutral, 31.3% (n=47) agreed and 11.3% (n=17) strongly agreed with this statement.

Results shows the perspectives of 150 students regarding Beliefs and Attitudes towards Menstruation "When women are with men, they blush when they saw an advertisement about sanitary pads" 8.0% (n=12) of respondents strongly disagreed, 20.0% (n=30) disagreed, 24.7% (n=37) were neutral, 24.0% (n=36) agreed and

23.3% (n=35) strongly agreed with this statement. "While having periods, should women stay away from men?" 14.7% (n=22) of respondents strongly disagreed, 21.3% (n=32) disagreed, 23.3% (n=35) were neutral, 21.3% (n=32) agreed and 19.3% (n=29) strongly agreed with this statement. "Is periods punishment for women" that is 15.3% (n=23) of respondents strongly disagreed, 24.0% (n=36) disagreed, 26.0% (n=39) were neutral, 24.0% (n=36) agreed and 10.7% (n=16) strongly agreed with this statement.

Beliefs and attitudes of the experience of menstruation

Figure 1 shows the perspectives of 150 students regard-

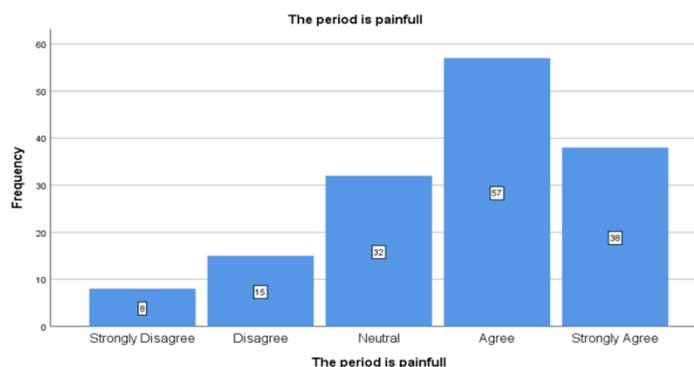


Figure 2. The period is painful?

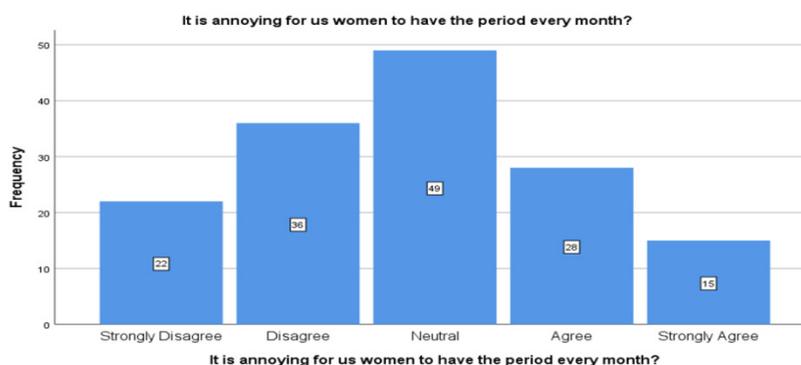


Figure 3. It is annoying for us women to have the period every month?

Table 4. Summary of descriptive analysis

Variable	Range	Mean	S.D	Variance
Demographic Data	3	1.4	.546	.354
Preparedness	2	1.91	.960	.926
Attitudes and beliefs	2	3.15	1.17	1.39

ing Beliefs and Attitudes towards Menstruation “The period is dirty” 15.3% (n=23) respondents strongly disagreed, 19.3% (n=29) disagree, 24.0% (n=36) were neutral, 26.7% (n=36) agreed and 14.7% (n=22) strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 2 describes the perspectives of 150 students regarding Beliefs and Attitudes towards Menstruation “The period is painful” 5.3% (n=8) of respondents strongly disagreed, 10.0% (n=15) disagreed, 21.3% (n=32) were Neutral, 38.0% (n=57) agreed and 25.3% (n=38) strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 3 shows the perspectives of 150 students regarding Beliefs and Attitudes towards Menstruation “Having period every month is annoying for women” 14.7% (n=22) respondents strongly disagreed, 24.0% (n=36) disagreed, 32.7% (n=49) were Neutral, 18.7% (n=28) agreed and 10.0% (n=15) strongly agreed with

this statement.

Descriptive analysis

The descriptive analysis of demographic data, preparedness, attitude and beliefs is shown in table 4.

Demographic Data

For calculation of mean, median, S.D and variance, summed score were used with the purpose of conducting descriptive analysis of demographic data. Sample of 150 female students were included for analysis purpose and the mean and standard deviation are (Mean = 1.4, Variance= .345 and SD = ±.546).

Preparedness

For calculation of mean, median, S.D and variance, summed score were used with the purpose of conducting descriptive analysis of demographic data. Sample of 150 female students were included for analysis purpose and the mean and standard deviation are (Mean =1.91, Variance =.926 and SD =± .960).

Attitudes and Beliefs

For calculation of mean, median, S.D and variance, summed score were used with the purpose of conducting descriptive analysis of demographic data. Sample of 150 female students were included for analysis purpose and the mean and standard deviation are (Mean =3.15, Variance =1.39 and SD =± 1.17).

DISCUSSION

The aim of this research was to investigate the views and attitudes of female students regarding menstruation with the main objective of studying the correlation between the two variables. The research also aimed to investigate the discrepancies between different demographic characteristics in attitudes and perceptions associated with menstruation. The findings show that all the respondents were female and belonged to the department of nursing. Most participants were between 18-22 and 23-27 years of age, and 67 and 55 years of age, respectively. Many of the participants were studying for Bachelor and Master's degree programs. There were 105 (70 percent) Bachelor's degree participants and 45 (30 percent) Masters Students. Of the overall 134(89.3 percent) and 16-20 years of 16(10.7) students, the participants were 11-15 years of age at first menstruation.

The results of 150 students' perspectives on preparedness "How much information did you have before your first menstruation" were 37.3 percent (n=56) participants with no information, 32.7 percent (n=49) with very little information, 25.3 percent (n=38) with sufficient basic information, and 4.7 percent (n=7) with this assertion that are highly well educated. Another research conducted by (UNICEF, 2019) shows that medical students have various sources of menstrual data, reflecting the diversity in their cultural and social backgrounds. For female students, school and family members (parents) are a key source of menstrual knowledge, as supported by current literature. That is 14.7 percent (n=22) participants strongly disagreed, 24.0 percent (n=36) disagreed, 32.7 percent (n=49) were neutral, 18.7 percent (n=28) agreed and 10.0 percent (n=15) strongly agreed with this argument, compared to

our study results about "To having the period is irritating for all women." But the results revealed that 14% of students in Szucs et al. (2017) thought that menstrual cycle should not be irritating as it is normal. This was slightly lower than other research in which 69-75 percent of female medical students found their health to require a monthly menstrual cycle. The variations in outcomes can be explained by underlying cultural influences in the various settings of this research.

Limitation

There were several limitation of this study. Firstly, the sample size was small, cross sectional study sample should be large to get the accurate findings of results from participants of the study. Secondly, the self-report question for young students was another limitation in this study. It mostly affects the study with biasness. Small sample size of this study cannot be generalized on the whole population and university.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have shown that female students have ample information from their mother and family about menstruation. They know it is upsetting their lives, but it is important for women's lives. They think of it as the feminine aspect of life. Pakistani girls feel insecure about communicating with others about menstruation.

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