



Menstrual concepts, hygiene practices and health seeking behaviour of adolescent girls in Bangladesh: A study on slum areas in Rajshahi

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to explore the conceptions towards the menstruation cycle, hygiene practices during menstruation and the health seeking behaviour during menstrual problems of the adolescent girls from some selected slums in Rajshahi city who are primarily migrated from rural areas. In total, 30 in-depth interviews and two focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted. The study findings reveal that adolescent girls have no idea about menarche before their menstruation that is why the majority of the adolescent girls get frightened during their menarche and become nervous about their situation. There are various misconceptions towards menstruation. Majority of the slum dwelling adolescent girls think that menstruation is a shameful issue. The study findings show that majority of the adolescent girls from slums face different types of health issues related to menstruation. Among those difficulties are lower abdominal pain, stress, anxiety, white discharge with bad smell, excessive white discharge, itching in the private part, iron deficiency, abdominal cramps, irregularity of menstruation, muscle spasms of leg, vomiting, nausea, headache, excessive bleeding, less bleeding during menstruation, lumbago etc. Due to insufficient awareness and poor financial condition of family they cannot take proper treatment which is very alarming for their reproductive health.

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Introduction

In Bangladesh, adolescent girl population is approximately 36 million, who face many challenges as they are physically, mentally and socially vulnerable (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2016). Adolescence is a very crucial time in every girl's life, because in this time there are different types of changes occurred in a human body, both in physical and mental in nature. Especially every adolescent girl faces an important situation in their teenage life known as

menstruation which is called menarche at the first experience of menstruation cycle. Menstruation is a very important issue of reproductive health in a girl's life. It is a natural process in a female's body. According to World Health Organization (1999), 10-19 years of age is considered as the adolescent period. Menstruation is one of the major natural causes of adolescent changing in a girl's life. Adolescent girls experience this menstruation cycle suddenly in their lives and for the changes in body created by it also creates