

Can Menstrual Cup be an Alternative Solution for Menstrual Hygiene Management?

Cognizance of Health Care Professionals

Mamta Parihar

H.O.D Medical Surgical Nursing, Govt. College of Nursing, Jodhpur. (Raj.), PhD Scholar Geetanjali University, Udaipur.

A woman is the essence of this universe and the universe without a woman would be like galaxy without the Sun. If there would be no woman, the planet is surely going to end. On any given day 800 million women of reproductive age group (RAG) are menstruating worldwide. Monthly bleeding is a sign of health and reproductive maturity.

A menstrual cup is a type of feminine hygiene product which is usually made up of medical grade silicone, shaped like a bell and it is flexible. Menstruating women can wear it in her vagina to catch the menstrual flow. At the end of the monthly period, the cup can be sterilised, usually by boiling in water. Unlike tampons and pads, the cup collects menstrual fluid rather than absorbing it.

Manufacturers have different recommendations regarding replacement of the cups, but in general they can be reused for 10 years or more. The present study is a survey to know the cognizance of health care professionals about menstrual cups as a better alternative to pads and tampons by marketing them as more practical, cheaper, and eco-friendly device.

Need for the study: A woman is generally having 450 menstruation cycles throughout her life and uses 10,000 or more sanitary protections in her life time. However it depends on individual's menstrual flow and the quality of sanitary product. On an average she spends over Rs. 2.50 lakh throughout her fertile life. The policy brief summarises previous research on MHM and highlights the Sanitation and Hygiene Applied Research for Equity (SHARE) Consortium's contribution to MHM. The knowledge gaps still exist; it sets out clear recommendations for improving policy and programmes globally for improving women health and the health of the earth (Kaiser, 2015).

There is still a need of research on MHM and alternative solutions and to highlight the impor-

tance of integrating MHM in sanitation programming and the need to provide access to absorbent sanitary materials for women and girls in low and middle income countries (Juma et al, 2017).

Objective

This study was conducted to evaluate the cognizance of health care professionals on alternative solutions for menstrual hygiene management specifying on the use of menstrual cup.

Conceptual framework: The study conceptualised the system model theory.

Review of literature

Lack of menstrual knowledge and access to sanitary products have been proposed as barriers to menstrual health. In response, interventions targeting MHM needs have seen increasing implementation in public and private sectors. However, there has been limited assessment of their effectiveness (Montgomery et al, 2016)

A study was designed to determine the magnitude of women aware of the menstrual cup as a form of sanitary protection, and how many women might use such protection. Menstrual cup was suggested as an alternative to conventional sanitary protection for today's women in our climate of increasing environmental awareness (Stewart et al, 2009)

A study was conducted at Gujarat Medical Education & Research Society on 158 participants with regular menstrual cycle and provided menstrual cups to be used for three consecutive menstrual cycles. Eighty percent participants found insertion and 90 percent participants found removal easy. There were few side effects like rashes, dryness or infection and demonstrate that menstrual cup has no significant health risks and was acceptable (Kakani & Bhatt, 2017).

Table 1: Distribution of participants by sociodemographic characteristics (N=492)

S. No.	Demographic variable	Total	Frequency	Have Cognizance	Percentage	No cognizance	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	193	83	43.0	110	57.0
		Female	299	127	42.5	172	57.5
2	Marital status	Married	72	44	61.1	28	38.9
		Unmarried	420	167	39.8	253	60.2
3	Age	Up To 20	242	91	37.6	151	62.4
		20 <	250	151	60.4	131	52.4
4	Religion	Hindu	449	192	42.8	257	57.2
		Muslim	32	3	9.4	29	90.6
		Christian	9	4	44.4	5	55.6
		Sikh	2	1	50.0	1	50.0
6	Educational status	Lab Tech	6	0	0	6	100
		ANM	47	14	29.78	30	63.83
		GNM	76	27	35.52	49	64.47
		BSc Nsg	310	130	41.93	180	58.06
		Post-Graduation	34	24	70.58	10	29.41
		MBBS	17	14	82.35	3	17.64
		Phd	1	0	0	1	100
7	Occupation	Nsg. Student	458	187	40.82	266	58.07
		Nursing Tutor	10	9	90	1	10
		Professor	3	3	100	0	0
		Information Asst.	3	3	100	0	0
Total		Participants	492	210	42.7	282	57.3

Methods & Procedure

A quantitative approach with a descriptive survey design was used to find out the cognizance about menstrual cup. The sample size was 492 health care professionals. Participant's response were taken from a self-structured questionnaire from various nursing colleges and hospitals of Jodhpur district in Rajasthan from 6–12 May 2018 for assessing their cognizance about the alternative solution of MHM. Data analysis was done by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Results

The study revealed that most of the health care professionals were not aware about the alternative solutions for MAM, as they are the pillars of health care services in all sectors, they are expected to be acquainted with new technique in the field of human health. However out of 492 participants 43 percent of health care professionals had heard about menstrual cup device whereas 57 percent had not heard about any other alternative of MHM (Table 1).

Discussion

Even this group was having inadequate awareness of cognizance about the latest trend its very awful for the normal population of reproductive age group while our country is fighting with the problem of safe disposal of products of menstrual period. Somewhat similar study by Mittal (2015) in Punjab for assessing knowledge and attitude of medical and nursing students regarding premenstrual syndrome showed less awareness about MHM and alternative solutions. Earlier reports on the current findings are similar to the study done in Ethiopia where Girls knowledge and practice regarding MHM was low (Upashe et al, 2015). Another study which implies that knowledge gaps which still exists for MHM and

emphasising that the policy makers and Government should take strict action for availing proper sanitation products in low socio income countries like India (Kaiser, 2015). Present study included men also for their cognizance as menstrual hygiene challenges are rooted in gender inequality (Mahon, Tripathy, & Singh, 2015).

Implications

The study explored the level of cognizance of healthcare workers which still needs to improve. In nursing education this could be a great element of health education for RAG women along with the cooperation of health workers and policy makers, as menstrual cup can be a revolutionary change for betterment of women's health and our environment.

Recommendations

The study can be done on a larger population and in community for assessing the practice, and a randomised control trial can be done for the effectiveness of new method. Menstrual cup can be considered as a possible way to improve the MHM of poor women in low income countries, reflected by ongoing studies in e.g. India, Kenya and Nepal.

Conclusion

The study nested on the awareness regarding the alternative solutions for the monthly physiological phenomena of RAG women in accordance to alignment of their body and the health of the earth which need to be addressed as 57 percent of the participants have not even heard about it and only 25 women were using a menstrual cup at the time of study.

References

1. Juma J, Nyothach E, Laserson KF, Oduor C, Arita L, Ouma C et al. Examining the safety of menstrual cups among rural primary school girls in western Kenya: Observational studies nested in a randomised controlled feasibility study. *BMJ Open* 2017; 7(4), e015429. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2016-015429>
2. Kaiser S. Menstrual Hygiene Management: Policy Brief. Seecon International GmbH, 13/2018 Yo (December): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1999.tb02784.x>
3. Kakani CR, Bhatt JK. Study of adaptability and efficacy of menstrual cup in managing menstrual health and hygiene, *IJRCOG* 2017; 6(7): 3045-53
4. Keuangan K, Indonesia R, Asistensi TIM, Fiskal BD. (2012). Policy Brief, Attitudes towards, and acceptability of menstrual cups as a method for managing Menstruation: Experiences of women and schoolgirls in Nairobi, Kenya. African Population and Health Research Center, No.21, 201, 1-4
5. Mahon T, Tripathy A, Singh N. Putting the men into menstruation: The role of men and boys in community menstrual hygiene management. *Waterlines* 2015; 34(1): 7:14. <https://doi.org/10.3362/1756-3488.2015.002>
6. Mittal S. Knowledge, Attitudes and Severity of Symptoms of Premenstrual Syndrome in a sample of Medical and Nursing Students: A Cross Sectional Study. *Research Journal of Pharmaceutical, Biological and Chemical Sciences*, 2, 1162.
7. Montgomery P, Hennegan J, Dolan C, Wu M, Steinfield L, Scott, L. Menstruation and the cycle of poverty: A cluster quasi-randomised control trial of sanitary pad and puberty education provision in Uganda. *PLoS ONE* 2016; 11(52): 1-26. <https://doi.1371/journal.phone.0166122>
8. Stewart K, Powell M, Greer R. An alternative to conventional sanitary protection: Would women use a menstrual cup? *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology* 2009; 29(1): 49–52 *Gynaecology*, 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0144361080 2628841>
9. Upashe SP, Tekelab T, Mekonnen J. Assessment of knowledge and practice of menstrual hygiene among high school girls in Western Ethiopia. *BMC Women's Health* 2015; 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12905-015-0245-7>

अक्षम व्यक्तियों के प्रति सद्भाव जगाने की अनुपम मुहिम

यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि समाज में बहुधा दिव्यांगों के साथ समानता का व्यवहार नहीं किया जाता नतीजन वे सामान्यजनों को मिलने वाली अनेक सुविधाओं से वंचित रहते हैं। कुदरत के इन मारों के प्रति न्यायोचित, समानता का भाव जाग्रत करने की दिशा में दोनों हाथों और पावों से अक्षम कोझिकोडे (केरल) के प्रजीत जयपाल ने 2018 में कोझिकोडे से दिल्ली कार चला कर इतिहास रचा था, वहां वे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से मिले।

गए साल की सफलता से प्रोत्साहित हो कर प्रजीत ने एक नई चुनौती को गले लगाया है; वे कार से 80,177 कि.मी. की विश्व यात्रा करेंगे। हाथ-पावों से अशक्त विश्व कार से 80 देशों के दौरे पर जाने वाले वे दुनिया के पहले शख्स होंगे। उनके साथ एक केयर टेकर और मैकेनिक होंगे। यात्रा के दौरान महाद्वीपों के बीच शिपिंग भी होगी।

यात्रा के निमित्त विशेष रूप से तैयार कार टाटा मोटर्स द्वारा प्रदान की गई है। कार यात्रा के वीज़ा, आवास जैसे अन्य खर्चे रोटेरी क्लब कालीकट बीच तथा जूनियर चैंबर इंटरनेशनल फेरोके मैट्रो चैंप्टर द्वारा उठाए जाएंगे। करीब दस वर्ष पूर्व एक कार दुर्घटना में उनके गले से निचले हिस्से में पक्षाघात हो गया था। शारीरिक विकलांगों के पुनर्वास हेतु वे 'दिव्यांग फाउंडेशन' संचालित करते हैं। उनकी आगामी योजनाओं में 2021 में केरल में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय सक्षमता एक्सपो का आयोजन है। इस कार्यक्रम में आगंतुकों के लिए अक्षम व्यक्तियों से संबद्ध प्रदर्शनियां, दवाएं, छात्रवृत्तियां आदि की जानकारी सुलभ कराई जाएंगी।