

AN ATTITUDE STUDY AMONG COLLEGE GOING WOMEN RELATED TO MENSTRUAL STRESS

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

Menstruation has distinct somatic, physiological and psychological aspects distinct to each of its phases. Studies have showed menstruation results in adjustment related insufficiency, irritability and mood disorders, inattentiveness, depression and even suicidality. The study helps to find menstruation as an entity towards psychiatric morbidity and its necessary further implications.

The study aims at clearly identifying the nature and exact time of onset of psychiatric morbidity during the period of menstruation and also the need of undertaking appropriate measure towards cure of the same.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a questionnaire-based case study among thirty-five college-going women through premenstruum, menstruum and postmenstruum.

RESULTS

It is found from this study that attitude does bring about a significant change in the nature of menstrual experience.

CONCLUSION

The present study helps us to find out the exact time of occurrence of psychiatric comorbidity in relation to menstruation and their probable nature and outcome.

KEYWORDS

Attitude, Menstruation, Stress.

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BACKGROUND

In addition to the daily nuances, women have an additional event of menstruation associated with its distress and other social factors.¹ Menstruation has distinct somatic,² physiological³ and psychological⁴ aspects distinct to each of its phases.⁵ Studies have showed menstruation results in adjustment related insufficiency,⁶ irritability and mood disorders,⁷ inattentiveness,⁸ depression⁹ and even suicidality.¹⁰ The female role and attitude towards menstruation has been ascribed to internal hormonal changes and its associated physiological factors. The resultant myth and ideas of "irreversible evil" as in Roman civilisation and Hindu mythology are not unknown. The concept of Menstrual etiquette¹¹ has been devised and role of education towards developing a correct attitude towards this physiological phenomenon has also been studied.¹² On studying symptomatology "anxiety" is commonly found as the most experienced event,¹³ more specifically in the premenstruum and postmenstruum phase. The concept of anxiety is sometimes compared with the concept of arousal.¹⁴

Aims and Objectives

The positive symptoms experienced during menstruation can be assessed by using questionnaires, as in this study.¹⁵ The study aims at clearly identifying the nature and exact time of onset of psychiatric morbidity during the period of menstruation and also the need of undertaking appropriate measure towards cure of the same.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a questionnaire-based case study. Thirty-Five undergraduate students belonging to the age group of 19 - 21 years were selected for this study. The sampling technique used was selective random sampling. They were all unmarried belonging to a nuclear family, mostly living in city and free from any apparent morbidity. The menstrual flow on interviewing was taken to be normal on an average. The subjects were screened for general medical illness by the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ). Thereafter, they were screened for distress by using Menstrual Distress Questionnaire (MDQ)¹⁶ and Menstrual Attitude Questionnaire (MAQ).¹⁷ Menstrual Distress Questionnaire (MDQ) is a standard method used for measuring the cyclical symptoms related to menstruation. It was developed by RH Moos in 1968 and revised and reprinted in 1991. In this study, the revised version has been used. It is a self-reporting inventory for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment of premenstrual and menstrual symptoms. There are three forms of MDQ. Form C measures symptoms experienced during each of the three phases of a menstrual cycle. Short Form-T consists of

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“calmest” phase and more distressed individuals reported more negative symptoms during the phase.

Implication

Studies related to Attitude among individuals in itself is weak statistically, but nevertheless this study is unique because it was conducted among educated and aware individuals on a subject that is quite often considered and neglected at the same time on discussing psychiatric morbidities. The sample size was small, so also the hormonal level consideration during the phases and comparison with psychological comorbidities could have been considered. This ensures need for further studies in this field and warrants more inputs into this relatively unventured domain.

Limitations

The study has a very small sample with limited variety of the subjects belonging to a specific stratum of the society. It could have been undertaken on a larger platform using more subject attributes. Moreover, more sophisticated statistical tools could have been undertaken while interpreting results. More psychiatric comorbidities could also have been incorporated. These issues warrant a scope for further research into this area.

CONCLUSION

The present study helps us to find out the exact time of occurrence of psychiatric comorbidity in relation to menstruation and their probable nature and outcome.

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