

ABSTRACT

A cross sectional study was carried out in Mawlamyinegyun aiming to describe the socio-demographic characteristics, to assess the awareness and practices relating to menstrual hygiene among adolescent schoolgirls. One urban high school and three rural high schools were selected by simple random sampling. A total of 250 respondents from grade 9, 10, and 11 were assessed using pre-tested, self-administered questionnaires. Age of respondents ranged from 13 to 20 years. Mothers of respondents had mostly low education level and were dependents. Median per capita monthly income was 16,667 Kyats. Two-third of respondents had elder sister. Majority of respondents lived in poor housing without bedroom, bathroom and running tap water. Age at menarche ranged from 10-16 years with mean(SD) of 12.42 (1.36) years. Duration of menstruation was 3 days with regular cycle in majority of the respondents. Almost all respondents knew that menstruation is a normal physiological process. Majority knew menstrual hygiene is important for health, itchiness and white discharge as symptoms and cervical cancer as disease due to poor menstrual hygiene. Major sources of information on menstruation and menstrual hygiene were mother and elder sister and majority desired further information from health care personnel. Knowledge score of the respondents ranged from 6-17, 78% of respondents had poor knowledge and 60.8% had poor practice. Almost all respondents used sanitary pads, change dit twice a day. Most took bath daily during menstruation and cleaned their external genitalia after voiding urine and/or feces with mainly water. Majority washed underwear with soap and water and dried these in sunshine outdoors. Restrictions during menstruation included avoidance of food, going to school, religious, social, cooking and regular physical activities as their belief. There was statistically significant association between place of school and per capita monthly income with knowledge on menstruation and menstrual hygiene of the respondents. Similar significant association was found between place of school, number of underwear and knowledge level with practice on menstrual hygiene of the respondents. It is recommended that awareness raising and education programs on menstruation and menstrual hygiene should be done on adolescents, mothers, family members, elder sisters, teachers, and peers as they are the sources of information.