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**EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNED TEACHING PROGRAMME ON KNOWLEDGE  
REGARDING SELECTED ASPECTS OF REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AMONG  
ADOLESCENT HOSTELITE GIRLS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS, JALANDHAR,  
PUNJAB**

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**INTRODUCTION**

*“Knowledge is the key to a healthier life. And education is powerful medicine.”*

**K. Park**

The future of India lies in the hands of our youth. Adolescence is a period when physical growth and maturation are accompanied by mental and psychological development. It is an extremely important period for developmental achievement and reproductive growth. Among adolescent period early adolescence is the first stage, characterized by a spurt of growth and the development of secondary sexual characteristics<sup>1</sup>.

The World Health Organization (2003) defines adolescence as the period of life between 10- 19 years. Adolescence is a stage of developmental transition, a bridge between childhood and adulthood. It involves progress from appearance of Secondary Sex characteristics (puberty) to sexual and reproductive maturity. It is the stage of development of adult mental processes and adult identity and transition from total socio-economic dependence to relative independence<sup>2</sup>.

About one fifth (22-23%) of the world population are adolescents (Jejeedhoy,1998). Despite this, their reproductive health needs are poorly understood and ill served. Adolescents often have poor information about reproduction and little access to reproductive health services (The Worlds women 1991). Reproductive health is a crucial part of general health and a central feature of human development.

According to WHO Reproductive Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of reproductive disease or infirmity. Reproductive Health deals with the reproductive processes, functions and system at all stages of life. It implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so .Reproductive Health is a universal



concern, but is of special importance for a girl during her reproductive years. Although most reproductive health problems arise during the reproductive years. Therefore reproductive health is such an important component of general health<sup>3</sup>.

Changes make life more beautiful and worth living, if one knows how to adapt oneself and adjust to the challenges presented by the situation; then he or she can face any challenge in life. The changes are more frequent in girls than boys. Girls mature earlier, and reach the period of rapid growth than boys. The rapid growth and change in the physical structure is after the attainment of puberty<sup>4</sup>.

So far the health system has specifically targeted infants, children below 6yrs and pregnant women. Therefore adolescents have been ignored by the government and other health sectors. It is only since 1996 that reproductive and child health programme has included adolescent health in its spectrum of package<sup>2</sup>.

Puberty and menstruation is viewed as an instrument of social control over women in all major cultures and religions of the world. Puberty has been defined as the state of being functionally capable of procreation. Entering puberty is an important milestone in reproductive life and, secular changes in the timing of puberty may be an important indicator of the general reproductive health in a population. All physical characteristics require extra ordinary attention and examination during this period<sup>5</sup>.

There are many changes that occur in a female body during puberty. The action of hormone such as estrogen and progesterone causes changes in the body and many of the unstable feelings that she may experience. The very first symptom of puberty in girls is the enlargement of the size of their nipples and appearance of little pubic hair. Gradually the girls go through continuous growth in the breasts, pubic hair, hair in the arm pits, changes in skin and starting of menstrual cycle. Amazingly all these changes are prepare the body physically to be able to conceive and bear children. However it can take a lot longer to be able to cope emotionally, mentally and spiritually with sexuality and having children<sup>6</sup>.

The start of menstruation is a momentous event in girl's life. Some girls greet those first those drops of blood with joy or relief, while others feel bewildered and scared. Menstruation is the major biological process which facilitates reproduction. When a girl starts to have a regular menstrual cycle it means that she is fertile and is able to have a baby. It is a natural monthly cycle in women having monthly vaginal discharge at an interval of about 28 days. It can start between the age of eight and eighteen years and last until between ages 40 and 60 years<sup>7</sup>.



Associated with menstruation, women will have to face many difficulties. Dysmenorrhea is one of the most common menstrual problems. Dysmenorrhea is defined as pain associated with menstruation. This is always associated with a negative impact on the social and academic achievement of many adolescent girls. While the pain may be only mild for some girls, others experience severe discomfort. Based on estimates, 15% of the total females aged 13-19 yrs experience severe dysmenorrhea. But still proper management and treatment can help the girls to reduce the intensity of pain and the occurrence of dysmenorrhea and thereby it helps to avoid further complications<sup>8</sup>.

Adolescents are the future of India. The existence of adolescent reproductive health problems is a reality. Hence their reproductive health aspects need special and urgent attention to all concerned. Lack of awareness, insufficient health facilities and practice are other important factors that need to be addressed. The health of the adolescent is an important factor which makes the health and positive energy of a nation. By ensuring the health of our adolescents we can envisage the growth of India from a developing nation to a developed one.

#### **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

A young girl becomes aware of the shades of grey; she may start to sense more vividly the hidden motives, thoughts and actions of others. She may start to sense a world beyond what she has experienced until this time and that may be confusing alternatively when she becomes an adolescent. When a young girl begins to grow up to be an adolescent she will be getting ready to perform her role in reproduction. Thus this period is the best time to educate her about reproductive health. Then why not take an interest in teaching the girl during her adolescent period.

When young girls reach puberty, they wonder why these changes occur and want to know what is normal. Thus, health care professionals must be well equipped to answer, and feel comfortable dealing with the adolescent questions and make them clear about the developmental changes. Among adolescents reproductive health, puberty and menstruation are considered as a land mark in the process of growth and maturation. This is a time when the individual feels himself different from others and puts the adolescents at risk for teasing and ridicule<sup>9</sup>.

As the body of girls goes through many physical changes during puberty, they should be provided with knowledge about their body changes, reproductive system and also about the menstruation. Girls should be educated about the proper terms for their genital area. If she has learned to accept puberty and menstruation as a normal physiological process she will accept the temporary discomfort it brings and will not allow to upset her emotionally and change her



behavior. The girls should be moulded in such a way that they do not feel ashamed of the changes their body is going through<sup>10</sup>.

Reproductive health in particular related to maternal health and reproductive tract infections is recognized as a health priority in developing countries. But much less attention is paid to menstrual health and menstrual disorders in developing countries. It revealed high rates of menstrual morbidity on population based studies. However much of the existing research focuses on prevalence estimates as there is little information on menstruation, and hygienic practices. Of all menstrual complaints, dysmenorrhea is the most common and arguably, the least understood and addressed complaint. Thus the girls should be educated about the significance of pubertal changes, menstruation, menstrual hygiene and the proper management of dysmenorrhea.

For many girls, menstruation is a serious concern, at this time they suffer from various physical, physiological and psychological discomfort. Few mothers openly talk about this with their daughters, where as some hesitate to inform, because of social and cultural taboos. Therefore the menstrual problem puts the young children into many embarrassing situations, leading to negative orientation to this process. So inadequate knowledge, misconception and wrong ideas lead to undue fear, anxiety and undesirable attitudes in the minds of those adolescent girls. Since it is also proved that age of attaining maturity has also come down, need for this study is to help these girls especially in their earlier adolescent period to prepare for their bodily changes and develop a positive attitude to cope with these changes by the right kind of information at the right time through teaching programme.

As a health professional the nurse should discuss, support and teach the adolescent girls regarding their reproductive health particularly during their adolescent period as they are in the changing process. This would prevent the adolescents from becoming psychologically upset, and the received education would wipe away all wrong ideas and misconceptions.

The investigator was interested in studying the knowledge among adolescent hostelite girls as during her hostel days she felt that many adolescent hostelite girls during this period lack the proper guidance and information regarding their reproductive health. This happens more often when they lack the warmth and care from their parents especially mother and are likely to get frighten. Thus the lack of knowledge in this area may leads to psychological depression and inadequate knowledge regarding hygienic measures during menstruation may become one of the leading causes for morbidity and mortality among adolescent hostelite girls. So the investigator felt



it was important to study and assess the knowledge of adolescent hostelite girls regarding puberty and menstruation, and there is a need for a teaching programme to improve their knowledge.

Adolescence is the period in which the most dramatic changes occur physically, psychologically, and socially within the life. The reproductive changes include puberty and menstruation begin to appear during early adolescence period, as a result of hormonal stimulation. They become apparent first in females, when compared to males. By the time their physical growth is completed, the bodies of women show several marked differences. Such a change, however, is not an easy task. It is not uncommon for the adolescent girl when she resides in the hostel, and may experience disappointment, discouragement, anxiety and frustrations during this developmental period. The rapidly changing world makes establishing roles and values are extremely difficult task to accomplish. The hurt and confusion adolescent hostelite girls feel regarding their "sense of self" is often times expressed in antisocial behavior or psychological/physical symptoms. Thus there is an emergent need to educate the adolescent hostelite girls regarding selected aspects of reproductive health in order to enhance their knowledge levels and help them to develop as a healthy adult.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study are to:

- determine the knowledge of adolescent hostelite girls regarding selected aspects of reproductive health.
- find the effectiveness of planned teaching programme among adolescent hostelite girls regarding selected aspects of reproductive health.
- Find the association between the pretest knowledge score and the selected demographic variables.

### **Methods**

An evaluative approach with one group pre test, post test design was used for the study. The sample consisted of 50 adolescent hostelite girls who belong to 12-14 years and who are studying in the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> standard. They were chosen by purposive sampling technique. The study was conducted at St Ann's High school in Mangalore. The data collection period extended from 21.11.09 to 28.11.09. The data was collected before and after the teaching programme by administration of structured knowledge questionnaire.

### **Results**

The data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The result showed that the



mean post test knowledge score of adolescent hostelite girls ( $\bar{X}_2=34$ ) was higher than the mean pre test knowledge score ( $\bar{X}_1=16.42$ ). The calculated 't' value is greater than the table value ( $t_{49}=35.00$ ;  $p<0.05$ ) The computed 't' value shows that there is a significant difference between the two mean knowledge score This indicates that PTP is effective in increasing the knowledge score of adolescent hostelite girls regarding selected aspects of reproductive health.

Chi-square was computed to test the association between pre test knowledge scores of adolescent hostelite girls. The result was noted that there is a significant association between knowledge level of adolescent hostelite girls and selected demographic variables such as age ( $\chi^2$  cal=21.1;  $p<0.05$ ) and year of school programme ( $\chi^2$  cal=17.288;  $p<0.05$ ), Whereas no association was found between religion ( $\chi^2$  cal=0.995;  $p>0.05$ ), place of residence ( $\chi^2$  cal= 1.691;  $p>0.05$ ), duration of hostel stay, ( $\chi^2$  cal=5.471;  $p>0.05$ ) educational status of mother ( $\chi^2$  cal=2.981;  $p>0.05$ ) and, source of information ( $\chi^2$  cal=1.750;  $p>0.05$ ).

### **Interpretation and conclusion**

The overall experience of conducting this study was satisfying and enriching. The study was a new learning experience for the investigator. The study shows that there is a great need to develop and implement planned teaching programme on selected aspects of reproductive health. The study reveals that planned teaching programme can be used as an effective teaching learning material for the adolescent hostelite girls.

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