

Dysmenorrhea and Associated Factors among Adolescents in Galle Zonal Education Area

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Dysmenorrhoea is a common problem in the young females throughout the world as well as in Sri Lanka. It is characterized by severe and painful cramping in the lower abdomen radiating to the back and thighs, occurring before or during menstrual periods. Primary dysmenorrhea is especially common among adolescents. Studying the associated factors can provide valuable insights for its prevention and management. This descriptive cross-sectional study was designed to assess factors associated with dysmenorrhoea among adolescent girls in the Galle Zonal Education Area. Cluster sampling technique was used to recruit 152 students from three randomly selected schools. Girls of grades 8 to 12 were invited to participate. Data were collected using a pre-tested self-administered questionnaire until the required sample size was achieved. Data were analyzed using SPSS, employing descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Participants' age range was 12-18 years (mean 14.6 SD 2.3). Dysmenorrhea was experienced by 138 (90.3%) with moderate (n=81, 53.3%) to severe pain (n=34, 22.4%). Lower abdominal pain occurring during first 2 days of menstruation was identified as the most common symptom (n=126, 82.9%). Dysmenorrhea was reported to have a negative influence on academic performance (n=82, 54.3%) and extracurricular activities (n=91, 59.9%). When chi-square test was used to study the associated factors, no significant associations ($p>0.05$) were found between dysmenorrhea and factors such as age of menarche, BMI, regularity of menstrual cycle, duration of menstruation, family history of dysmenorrhea, sedentary lifestyle, physical exercise, and engagement in sports or meal pattern. In this study we conclude that dysmenorrhea is common among the selected sample of adolescents, affecting their well-being, academic performances, and extracurricular activities. A multicentre study involving a large sample will be useful to identify risk factors that are modifiable.

Keywords: *adolescent girls, academic performances, associated factors, dysmenorrhoea*