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MENSTRUAL PERIOD AND PATHOLOGICAL MENSTRUAL CONDITIONS AMONG STUDENTS DUE TO THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIC STRESS AND LIFESTYLE CHANGES

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Relevance. Menstruation is a normal physiological event in a woman's life. Its regularity, amount and premenstrual symptoms determine the overall menstrual health. Normal menstrual cycle length is between 21 and 35 days, and the menstrual flow is between 2-7 days. Premenstrual symptoms and physiological and psychological changes occurring due to menstruation have a significant impact on a woman's life and her productivity at levels of academic achievements and social life. A variety of influences such as academic and emotional stresses and physical intensities are attributed to menstrual cycle abnormalities such as premenstrual syndrome (PMS), oligomenorrhea, menorrhagia, dysmenorrhea and amenorrhea. Sudden lifestyle changes, dietary modifications, weight changes, caffeine, smoking, drugs, reduction in physical activity and irregular sleep patterns, play a role in complicating menstrual health. Additionally, medical conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis and ovarian cysts affect the menstrual cycle.

Aim: students undergo an intense amount of stress during the exam period, which is linked to many menstrual cycle abnormalities. This study primarily focuses on the correlation between academic stress, lifestyle factors and menstrual disorders, and how it directs towards menstrual pathologies.

Materials and methods. A cross-sectional survey-based study was conducted among 90 students utilizing a structured questionnaire administered via Google forms. The questionnaire comprised 23 questions inquiring about the age, BMI, dietary habits, physical activity levels, known menstrual pathologies and quality of menstruation.

Results and their discussion. Ninety female students aged 15 – 28 years participated in the survey, with age distribution peaking in the 21- 25-year range. A majority of 75.6% are university students. Even though anthropometric data revealed a higher percentage of the normal BMI range, a concerning amount of 33.3 % showed deviations from the normal range on the assessment of dietary habits. Students who consumed proper meals per day were marginally below 50%, while the other students had different dietary habits, which mainly inclines towards unhealthy habits. 78.9% of students reported a regular variation of the cycle and the other 21.1% reported an irregular cycle. Out of all students, 10% had been diagnosed with PCOS, 2.2 % with ovarian cysts and 1.1% with endometriosis. Regular physical activity was reported by 73.4% of students whereas 26.7% reported no regular physical activity. The study sample comprised entirely of non-smokers and individuals who do not engage in regular alcohol intake.

Conclusions. This study highlighted a co-relation between the stress levels and the menstrual cycle changes; it was evident that students suffering from menstrual disorders showed significantly higher stress levels and changes in the normal menstrual parameters. Identifying self-remedies that alleviate their pain helps to improve pain coping methods. As young women, it's extremely important to have a proper understanding of changes in the body that are considered normal and abnormal and to seek proper medical attention. Interventions such as university-based wellness programs, stress management programs, and female-focused awareness programs may help to improve the quality of life in young women.