



ADOLESCENT GIRLS' KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MAINTAINING PERSONAL MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

Andriyani Mustika Nurwijayanti*, Laila Indah Anugrahani, Qurrotul Aeni, Rina Anggraeni

Bachelor of Nursing Study Program, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Kendal, Jln. Laut No. 31, Kendal, Jawa Tengah 51311, Indonesia

*Andriyani@stikeskendal.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Adolescent girls need to possess the right knowledge and habits regarding personal hygiene during menstruation. Knowledge of menstrual hygiene practices is a crucial component of maintaining reproductive health. This study aimed to assess the level of knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene among adolescent girls at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalongan. A quantitative method was employed, utilizing a descriptive design and a cross-sectional approach. The study population consisted of 328 female students, with a sample of 198 respondents selected via proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a knowledge questionnaire (Guttman scale) and a compliance questionnaire (Likert scale), both of which had undergone validity and reliability testing. Univariate analysis was performed using frequency distributions. The results indicated that the majority of respondents fell into the "good" knowledge category (100 students or 50.5%), followed by the "sufficient" category (66 students or 33.3%) and the "poor" category (32 students or 16.2%). While most adolescent girls demonstrated good knowledge.

Keywords: adolescent girls; knowledge level; menstruation; personal hygiene

INTRODUCTION

Menstruation is a natural biological process experienced by every woman, characterized by the shedding of the uterine lining (endometrium), which is then expelled through the vagina (Herien, 2024). Menstruation requires attention to personal hygiene, as improperly managed menstrual blood can serve as a breeding ground for microorganisms. A lack of knowledge and inadequate hygiene practices can increase the risk of various reproductive health issues—ranging from vaginal discharge, reproductive tract infections (RTIs), and pelvic inflammatory disease to more serious conditions such as cervical cancer and infertility (Aury et al., 2025).

Maintaining personal hygiene during menstruation is one way to ensure the cleanliness of the female genital area. Such care includes vulvar hygiene practices—such as changing sanitary pads regularly (at least 3–4 times a day), washing hands before and after changing pads, cleansing the genital area from front to back, and wearing absorbent cotton underwear (Amallya Faj'ri et al., 2022). It is important for adolescent girls to adopt these hygiene habits to help prevent reproductive health issues.

Adolescence is a transitional stage between childhood and adulthood, characterized by rapid physical and psychological growth and development. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), adolescents are individuals aged 10–19 who are at a crucial stage of their lives (Aryanti, 2022). For adolescent girls, prominent physical changes include breast and hip enlargement, the growth of fine hair on specific body parts, and the onset of menstruation as a sign of puberty (Andriani, 2022). When menstruation first begins, some adolescent girls have limited knowledge regarding personal hygiene; therefore, they require

accurate information on maintaining cleanliness to reduce the risk of bacterial and fungal infections in the genital area (Rufaridah et al., 2024).

Reproductive health issues continue to require attention, including in the Central Java region. A total of 801 cases of cervical cancer were recorded in Central Java in 2021 (Fazelita et al., 2023). This situation highlights the importance of maintaining reproductive health from adolescence, one way being through the practice of proper menstrual hygiene. Adequate knowledge regarding menstrual hygiene is expected to help adolescent girls understand the importance of maintaining personal hygiene during menstruation.

A preliminary study conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalungan in September 2025, involving interviews with 10 adolescent girls, revealed that 60% of the students changed their sanitary pads only twice a day, 50% changed their underwear once a day, and 70% did not know how to properly cleanse their genital area. These findings indicate that some adolescent girls are not yet optimally practicing menstrual personal hygiene. Given this situation, it is necessary to assess the knowledge and adherence of adolescent girls regarding menstrual personal hygiene. Therefore, the researcher is objective in conducting a study to examine the knowledge and adherence of adolescent girls at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalungan regarding menstrual personal hygiene.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative design, specifically a descriptive-correlational study with a cross-sectional approach. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalungan, Batang Regency, Central Java, in February 2026. The study population consisted of all female students in grades VII, VIII, and IX at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalungan who had already begun menstruating, totaling 328 students. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula with a 10% buffer, resulting in a total sample of 198 respondents. Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling was employed to ensure balanced representation across all study groups (classes VII-A through IX-G).

The research instruments consisted of two structured questionnaires that had undergone validity and reliability testing (validity test: calculated $r > 0.361$; Cronbach's Alpha: knowledge = 0.748, compliance = 0.741). The knowledge questionnaire comprised 15 multiple-choice items using a Guttman scale, categorized as Good (76–100%), Fair (56–75%), and Poor (<56%). Data analysis included univariate analysis to examine the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics, knowledge, and compliance, as well as bivariate analysis using the Spearman Rank test at $\alpha = 0.05$. Data analysis included univariate analysis to examine the frequency distribution of respondent characteristics, knowledge, and compliance, as well as bivariate analysis using the Spearman Rank test at $\alpha = 0.05$.

RESULT

Respondent Characteristics

The characteristics of the respondents based on age and class distribution are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below:

Table 1.
Description of Respondent Age (n = 198)

Karakteristik	Median	IQR	Minimal- maksimal
Age	13	1	12 – 16

Table 1, the median age of the respondents is 13 years, indicating that the majority of respondents are of that age.

Table 2.
Frequency Distribution of Characteristics by Grade Level (n = 198)

Kelas	Frekuensi	Presentase
IXA	9	4.5
IXB	9	4.5
IXC	10	5.1
IXD	8	4.0
IXE	8	4.0
IXF	8	4.0
IXG	9	4.5
VIIA	10	5.1
VIIB	8	4.0
VIIC	8	4.0
VIID	8	4.0
VIIE	8	4.0
VIIF	10	5.1
VIIG	10	5.1
VIIH	9	4.5
VIIIA	8	4.0
VIIIB	10	5.1
VIIIC	10	5.1
VIIID	10	5.1
VIIIE	8	4.0
VIIIF	10	5.1
VIIIG	10	5.1

Table 2, the classes with the highest number of respondents—10 individuals or 5.1%—are classes IXC, VIIA, VIIF, VIIG, VIIIB, VIIIC, VIIID, VIIIF, and VIIIG.

Description of Respondents' Knowledge

The levels of knowledge and adherence regarding menstrual hygiene are classified into three categories, as presented in Tables 3 and 4 below:

Table 3.
Frequency Distribution of Menstrual Personal Hygiene Knowledge Levels (n = 198)

Knowledge of Adolescent Girls	Frekuensi	Presentase
Good	100	50.5
Satisfactory	66	33.3
Needs Improvement	32	16.2

Table 3, the majority of respondents (100; 50.5%) possessed a good level of knowledge regarding personal hygiene during menstruation.

DISCUSSION

Overview of Respondent Characteristics by Age

The research results indicate that the majority of female adolescent respondents at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalongan are 13 years old. This shows that the respondents are predominantly early adolescents undergoing puberty, a stage marked by the onset of various physical, emotional, and social changes. At this age, these adolescent girls are beginning to adapt to such changes, including the development of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding personal health. The 13–16 age range represents a crucial phase in adolescent growth and development, characterized by physical, emotional, and social changes that necessitate appropriate support and guidance (Utamayasa, 2021). These findings align with the study by Hesty and Nurfitriani (2023), which showed that the majority of respondents were 13 years old (n=29; 61.7%). Similarly, research by Lindia and Apsari (2025) indicated that the majority of respondents were 13 years old (n=97; 75.2%).

According to Mubarak (2020), age is a factor that influences an individual's level of knowledge. As individuals age, they undergo physical and psychological development that impacts the maturity of their mindset and their ability to receive and process information. During early adolescence, cognitive development is still actively progressing, leading adolescents to become more aware of the biological changes they are experiencing, including menstruation. This awareness prompts them to seek information regarding reproductive health and menstrual hygiene, thereby enhancing their knowledge.

Overview of Respondent Characteristics Based on Grade Level

The research results indicate that classes IXC, VIIA, VIIF, VIIG, VIIIB, VIIIC, VIIID, VIIF, and VIIIG had the highest number of respondents, with 10 female students each. Overall, the number of respondents across the classes was relatively balanced, ensuring that all grade levels were represented in the study. The results of this study align with the research of Ikasari and Anggana (2020), which indicates that grade level plays a role in studies concerning student knowledge, as each grade level involves different learning materials and experiences. Students at higher grade levels tend to have received more instruction compared to those at lower grade levels.

According to Notoatmodjo (2020), education level is one of the factors influencing an individual's level of knowledge. The higher the level of education attained, the greater the amount of information and learning experience acquired. This is supported by Ariantini and Purmanasari (2025), who state that knowledge enhancement is gained not only through formal education but also through non-formal education and various other sources of information.

Overview of Adolescent Girls' Knowledge Regarding Menstrual Personal Hygiene

The study results indicate that the majority of female students at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalungan possess a good level of knowledge regarding menstrual personal hygiene, comprising 100 respondents (50.5%). Additionally, 66 respondents (33.3%) demonstrated a fair level of knowledge, while 32 respondents (16.2%) fell into the poor category. These findings suggest that most of the female students have a good understanding of the importance of maintaining personal hygiene during menstruation, although a portion of the respondents still lack optimal understanding.

According to Saimi (2024), an individual's level of knowledge is influenced by various factors, including age, education level, socioeconomic status, access to information, and cultural background. Knowledge is the outcome of the process of knowing, acquired through the sensory perception of an object. Swarjana (2022) explains that knowledge falls within the cognitive domain and plays a crucial role as the foundation for the formation of an individual's attitudes and actions.

The results of this study align with the research by Amallyya Faj'ri et al. (2022), which indicates that a good level of knowledge regarding menstrual personal hygiene is associated with personal hygiene practices during menstruation. Good knowledge enables adolescent girls to better understand the importance of maintaining genital hygiene, changing sanitary pads regularly, and practicing personal hygiene to prevent reproductive health issues.

CONCLUSION

The majority of female adolescent respondents at SMP Negeri 1 Pecalungan had a median age of 13 years. The majority of respondents fell into the "good" category regarding their knowledge of menstrual personal hygiene (50.5%). Knowledge regarding personal hygiene among female adolescents must be maintained through periodic monitoring—facilitated by education and monitoring logs—to ensure reproductive health is preserved through good habits

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