Handbook on information related to menstruation and menstrual hygiene for adolescent school girls in the district of Kalutara, Sri Lanka

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Background Information

- Multicultural background
- Low resource country
- Reproductive issues - taboo
- Menstrual hygiene management is an unmet need
- District of Kalutara multi sector, multi ethnic and multi religion representation
- Cross sectional descriptive study conducted
Background......

- Schools studied ➞ 47/301
- Sample ➞ 720/6833 adolescent school girls in grade 10 classes

- Self-administered questionnaire was developed and administered after pre testing
  Overall knowledge (cut off mark 50%) ➞ 25%
  Overall attitudes (cut off mark 60%) ➞ 67.5%
  Overall practices (cut off mark 60%) ➞ 17.3%
Objective

To develop a handbook to improve knowledge of menstruation and menstrual hygiene management among adolescent school girls in the district of Kalutara, Sri Lanka
Methods

Stages of development of handbook

1. Academic preparation

- Literature review → local and global
- Expert opinion → education, health, communication, environmental, design, clothing and textile sector
- Appropriate title & attractive cover page
- Each chapter introduced with an advocacy page
- Simple language with short sentences
- Motivating health messages
- Practical and skill development components
Methods ...

2. Review of the draft by panel of experts

- Director of education
- Curriculum development expert
- Consultant community Physician
- Communication consultant
- Consultant in waste management
- Senior lecturer in environmental engineering
Methods ...

3. Field testing

- **Usability** ➔ assess the relevance of the content
- **Accessibility** ➔ assess the structure and location of the information
- **Readability** ➔ user friendliness
- **Acceptability** ➔ stakeholders and students

4. Final editing
Results

- Originally written in native language (Sinhala) ‘Sinidu Suwa’ and translated into English ‘Soft Comfort’

- The title and the drawing of the cover page picture and wording depict “a girl experiencing a unique soft comfort” arousing the curiosity to read
Chapters of the handbook

1. Pubertal Changes
2. Menarche
3. Menstrual Cycle
4. Problems Related to Menstrual Cycle and Solution
5. Menstrual Hygiene
6. Menstrual Hygiene Management in School Setting
7. Detachable Sanitary Towel Holder
Results......

- Culturally appropriate measures were introduced to promote MHM

- Introduction of homemade low cost detachable sanitary towel holder

Method of use of detachable sanitary towel holder and the cloth menstrual towel

- Before first use wash separately with a soap and water and sun-dry. As using natural cotton fabric, it will become a bit smaller after first washing.
- Choose the sanitary ware according to your method of practice
  1. Cloth menstrual towel → folds it as instructions given above and fastens the hooks on the cloth menstrual towel with eyes on the device together to place it properly.
  2. Sanitary pad → just to paste it along the lengthwise
- To get the maximum non-leakage effect, please wear suitable tight underwear.

- Place the side with the cloth menstrual towel /sanitary pad of the holder on top of panty bottom and align lengthwise along it.
Launching

- Face, content and construct validity of the “handbook” was confirmed by the panel of experts.
- Launching of the handbook was taken place at NIHS, Kalutara
- Distributed the handbook among adolescents and stakeholders
Dissemination of The Handbook
Effectiveness on improving MHM was evaluated by conducting an intervention study for six months. Statically significant (P<0.001) improvement in knowledge, attitudes, and some practices/activities affected due to menstruation.

Introduced to National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka (responsible for developing curricula) to be considered as supplemental educational material for adolescent school children in Sri Lanka.

THANK YOU