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“Story Telling” How prepared are female students to experience menstruation at Islamic Boarding School “X”, Riau Province?

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Abstract

Background Menstruation is a condition of vaginal bleeding that occurs as a result of the monthly cycle. In relation to adolescent girls who are studying at Islamic boarding schools and are far from their families, there is a tendency for low levels of readiness and high anxiety. The further impact of unpreparedness for menstruation in adolescent girls can cause anxiety, psychological and pathological symptoms such as fear, inner conflict, and other disorders such as dizziness, nausea, menstrual pain and can also affect decreased studying concentration.

Objective: To listen to the stories of female students in readiness for menstruation while at the Islamic boarding school.

Method: Research design with the story telling method by listening to their experiences. The research was conducted 2-3 months. Informants consisted of 12 female students who were randomly selected with the criteria of those who had just experienced menarche, aged 11-12 years. Data collection techniques by indepth interview. Thematic analysis was used in analyzing the data.

Results: The first experience of menstruation, 7 person felt shocked and anxious, 5 person hid this condition. The pain experienced, 8 person were painful and 4 person were not painful. How to use sanitary napkins, 3 person already know, 9 person do not know. There are 2 person who consume painkillers, 10 others do not.

Conclusion: The majority of informants are not ready to experience menstruation, this can be seen from anxiety, experiencing menstrual pain, not knowing how to use sanitary napkins.

Suggestion: The school needs to provide regular health education for new students about the readiness of female students during menstruation.

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Introduction

Reproductive health is one of the important aspects that need to be considered in adolescent health. One of the important elements in reproductive health is the health of menstrual conditions in adolescent girls. Menstruation is a condition of vaginal bleeding that occurs as a result of the monthly cycle. In relation to adolescent girls who are studying in Islamic boarding schools and are far from their families, there is a tendency for low levels of readiness and high anxiety based on the results of interviews with 8 female students. The further impact of unpreparedness for menstruation in adolescent girls can cause anxiety, psychological and pathological symptoms such as fear, inner conflict, and other disorders such as dizziness, nausea, menstrual pain and can also affect decreased concentration in learning. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022 noted that the number of adolescents aged 10-19 years was 44,252,201 people, equivalent to 16% of the total population of Indonesia ^[1].

As many as one in five people in Indonesia are teenagers, with a population of around 1.3 billion teenagers worldwide. One of the menstrual disorders that can occur is menstrual pain. The impact of menstrual pain includes students experiencing decreased concentration in learning, lack of sports and social activities, and absences during class hours. Menstruation is the discharge of blood from the vagina, known as menstruation, which is a physiological process experienced by every woman between the ages of 10 and 16 years.^{[2][3]} Menstruation can be a worrying time for young women, often accompanied by emotional conditions that reflect fear, anxiety and confusion.^[4] Teenagers who experience menstruation need good mental preparation to achieve one of the physical maturity biologically.^[5] One study showed that menstrual pain can interfere with concentration while studying.^[6] Several factors that influence adolescents' readiness to face menstruation include: knowledge, age, attitude, mother's role, environment, availability of information, peers, exposure to social media, the role of health workers, the role of teachers, menstrual pain, physical activity, psychological (feeling anxious, surprised, sad, afraid, disappointed, embarrassed, worried and confused).^{[7][8][9][10]}

Storytelling is an art of telling stories that can be used as a means to instill values in children without having to lecture

the child. This method activates creativity, the child's way of thinking in telling what is felt so that people can understand what is being told.^[11] Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the experiences of female students regarding their experience of being prepared for menstruation.

Method

This type of research is qualitative with a case study design.^[12-15] The sampling technique in this study with inclusion criteria: having experienced 1-3 months of menstruation, age 11-12 years. Data collection technique through in-depth interviews. The study was conducted for 3 months at one of the Islamic Boarding Schools in Kampar Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia. Informants were asked to tell their experiences of facing their first menstruation with several indicators including: initial feelings of menstruation, menstrual pain, knowledge about using sanitary napkins and consumption of painkillers during menstruation. Data analysis used thematic analysis.

Results and Discussion

There were 12 person who became informants in this study, aged 11-12 years who had only experienced menstruation for 1-3 years. The following is the data of all research informants:

Table 1: List of Characteristics of Research Informants

No	Informants Code	Class	Age (years old)	Menstrual frequency (times)
1	P1	VII.G	11	2
2	P2	VII.F	11	1
3	P3	VII.M	12	3
4	P4	VII.M	12	2
5	P5	VII.F	12	3
6	P6	VII.G	11	2
7	P7	VII.F	11	2
8	P8	VII.M	12	3
9	P9	VII.M	12	3
10	P10	VII.F	12	3
11	P11	VII.G	12	3
12	P12	VII.G	12	3

Abbreviation: P= Person

Based on table 1, it is stated that the average informant was 12.5 years old and the average menstrual frequency was 2.5 times.

1. First Experience of Menstruation.

Based on the total informants, 7 person said they were shocked and anxious when they experienced their first menstruation and 5 others remained silent and did not tell about it. This can be seen in the interview quotation:

"mmm... at first I was shocked. Why was there blood when I peed, I was confused, ma'am..." (P1, P8, P9)

"What should I do ma'am... I'm scared ma'am. I don't know what to do, I'm just silent, I'm stressed ma'am. What should I do??? silent expression..." (P2, P3, P7)

"...What should I do, ma'am... I'm worried... I'm at a loss for what to do, I rushed to the bathroom and then went into the room to sleep..." (P4, P5, P11, P12)

"...At that time, when I just got my period, my stomach

hurt a bit, I thought my ulcer was acting up. My stomach hurt..." (P6, P10)

Anxiety is a state when negative emotions arise due to concerns about unexpected dangers that may occur in the future. Anxiety is actually a normal feeling for humans, because when anxious humans are made aware and reminded of the dangers that threaten. However, excessive anxiety can interfere with the learning process because of feelings of fear and worry.^[16] During menstruation, the problem experienced by almost all women is discomfort or severe pain during menstruation which is commonly called dysmenorrhea. This is what can cause anxiety in facing the first menstruation and in WHO (World Health Organization) data, the incidence of dysmenorrhea in Indonesia is 55% among productive age groups, where 15% of them complain that their activities are limited due to dysmenorrhea. Therefore, young women need sufficient information so that they can overcome anxiety when they get their first menstruation.

Dysmenorrhea is very common among secondary school girls and is associated with school absenteeism and limitations in social and academic activities. Given that most adolescents

do not seek medical advice for dysmenorrhea, health care providers should routinely screen for dysmenorrhea and offer treatment. Health education should be complemented by the availability of other services such as consultation with the school nurse and school physician and the availability of pain medications.^[19]

2. Pain during menstruation.

In this study, it was stated that the pain experienced by 8 person was in pain and 4 person were not in pain. This can be seen in the following interview quotation:

"...my stomach hurts. What's wrong with this? It hurts so bad. I'm crying..." (P3,P4, P5, P6)

"...it hurts ma'am.. I can stand it, but it really hurts. It's hard to express..." (P1, P2, P7, P12).

"... what is it ma'am.. it doesn't hurt that much ma'am. I'm just relaxed. I've heard about it from my friends too so I don't think too much about it..." (P8, P9, P10, P11)

Dysmenorrhea is one of the most common causes of pelvic pain in women. Dysmenorrhea can negatively impact a woman's quality of life and interfere with daily activities. The pathophysiology of primary dysmenorrhea is likely the result of the cyclooxygenase pathway producing increased prostanoids, specifically prostaglandins. Increased Prostaglandins cause uterine contractions that restrict blood flow and cause the production of anaerobic metabolites that stimulate pain receptors.^[20]

The cause of primary dysmenorrhea is still unclear, but one of the most accepted explanations is increased prostaglandin synthesis, which plays an important role in the development of ischemia and hypoxia, resulting in dysrhythmic uterine contractions and decreased blood flow.^[21] Sometimes young women assume that the pain is a normal thing when they menstruate, even though in fact the pain can hinder their daily activities and reduce their quality of life.^[22]

3. Knowledge about the use of sanitary napkins

Based on the results of this study, how to use sanitary napkins, 3 person already know to used, 9 person do not know use it. This can be seen in the following quote:

"... I already know from my friend, I have also gone to buy it at the mini market because I helped my friend, I have also chatted with my sister..." (P8,P10, P12).

"... never knew, I didn't ask, I've only seen advertisements on television, on social media, I don't understand how to use it, I've never seen it..."(P1,P2,P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P9, P11)

One of the efforts needed so that menstrual blood does not leak and can be active comfortably for women is to use sanitary napkins. Sanitary napkins are used to absorb blood and tissue that is released from the uterus. Sanitary napkins are placed in the inner layer of women's clothing and changed every 2-4 hours for about 3-7 days for one month. Sanitary napkins have different sizes and shapes, such as pads that use wings or those that have extra adhesive. The average woman has around 11,000-16,000 sanitary napkins in her lifetime. Some of the sanitary napkins available on the market include

tampons, cups, disposable pads, cloth pads. Most women in Indonesia use disposable pads during menstruation. Sanitary napkins are considered a comfortable, safe and easily available tool during menstruation.^[23]

4. Use of Menstrual Pain Relief Medication

Based on the results of this study, it states that there are 2 person who consume painkillers, 10 others do not. Herewas the interview quotation:

"...I don't use any medicine, I just drink a lot of water, I'm given some medicated oil to rub on my stomach, my mother once made me ginger water, I just take it to bed..." (P1, P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12).

"... I have taken medicine, because I am sick, ma'am..." (P1, P2)

Dysmenorrhea experienced by each woman is different, some are slightly disturbed but some are very disturbed to the point of being unable to carry out daily activities and making them have to rest or even be absent from school or work. The cause of dysmenorrhea pain is due to increased production of prostaglandins. This increase will result in uterine contractions and vasoconstriction of blood vessels.

To reduce the occurrence of menstrual pain, pharmacotherapy can be done, where analgesic drugs can be used as part of pharmacological menstrual pain management. When taken according to prescription, narcotic analgesics can cause nausea, vomiting, constipation, restlessness, and fatigue. The most effective pharmacotherapy therapy to overcome menstrual pain is with the use of analgesic drugs. Analgesics can be said to be effective in relieving pain because they work by blocking mediators so that the activity of the cyclooxygenase enzyme is inhibited and prostaglandin formation does not occur. Pharmacotherapy for menstrual pain has a significant effect on reducing the intensity of menstrual pain. Pharmacotherapy can be said to be effective, because with the use of analgesic drugs such as Ibuprofen and Paracetamol 500 mg^[24]

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Conclusion

Menstruation is a condition of blood coming out of the vagina that occurs as a result of the monthly cycle. One of the menstrual disorders that can occur is dimenorhoe. Story telling that was done was able to explore the informant's experience about menstruation. The majority of informants were not ready to face menstruation, this was seen from anxiety, experiencing menstrual pain, not knowing how to use sanitary napkins. Suggestion. The school needs to provide regular health education for new students about the readiness of young women to face menstruation.

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