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Proportion and severity of dysmenorrhoea and its effect on quality of life among adolescents in a selected government school in the Colombo District

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Background: Dysmenorrhoea is a less discussed major health concern of adolescent girls in Sri Lanka.

Objective: The objective of this study was to determine the proportion of dysmenorrhoea and its severity, and to compare the impact of it on Quality of Life (QoL) among adolescent girls in selected government schools in the Colombo District.

Method: A cross sectional analytical study was conducted among 150 adolescent girls in grades 10 and 11 in government schools in the Colombo District selected using multi-stage cluster sampling. Data was collected via a self-administered questionnaire. Severity of dysmenorrhoea was determined with a 10-point Visual Analogue Scale and categorized into three groups as mild, moderate and severe. QoL was determined with SF-36. Chi-squared and independent sample t-test were used for comparing the two groups where $p < 0.05$ was taken as statistically significant.

Results: Mean age was 15.1 ± 0.7 years. Proportion of girls having dysmenorrhoea was 80.7% ($n=121$). Dysmenorrhoea was more with regular menstrual cycles (82.6%, $n=109$) compared to irregular cycles (66.7%, $n=12$). The majority of the girls with dysmenorrhoea had moderate pain (52.9%, $n=64$) while nearly one quarter experienced severe pain (24%, $n=29$). Thirty seven point two percent ($n=45$) having dysmenorrhoea were taking medications. A statistically significant association was found between the severity of dysmenorrhoea and student's preference of taking medications ($X^2=16.08$, $p < 0.05$). Significantly lower QoL was observed among girls with dysmenorrhoea in following domains: physical health role limitation ($t=2.15$, $p=0.03$), bodily pain ($t=4.68$, $p=0.001$) and physical health summary as a whole ($t=-2.76$, $p=0.006$).

Conclusion: Dysmenorrhoea is a major health concern affecting QoL of school going adolescent girls in the Colombo District of Sri Lanka.