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Prevalence and associated factors of menstrual irregularities among student nurses in selected Nursing training schools

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Background: Menstruation-related health issues are experienced by a considerable population and becoming a common gynecological complaint causing physical and psychosocial distress with abdominal and back pain, bloating, headache, emotional irritability, and fatigue. Dysmenorrhea, premenstrual symptoms, and abnormal amounts are common.

Objective: To assess the prevalence of menstrual irregularities, associated factors, and level of stress among nursing students.

Method: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 272 nursing students in selected nurses training schools in Sri Lanka using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), pain scale, and a pre-tested interviewer-administered questionnaire developed by the researchers based on scientific literature. The study was ethically approved by the Ethics Review Committee, Faculty of Health Science, KIU, and data was analyzed by using SPSS version 23.0.

Results: The mean age of the participants was 25.1 years. The majority were non-vegetarians (95%) and having the behavior of eating junk food (89%). The menstrual irregularities were reported in 28% with moderate level pain (54.4%), 3-5 days of duration of menstruation (73%), moderate flow (85.7%), and low perceived stress (57.4%). Also, those signs and symptoms interfered with academic and clinical performance (60%) and daily activities (53.7%). Irregularity of menstruation was not associated with the age of menarche ($p=0.09$), junk food ($p=0.06$), or dietary pattern ($p=0.24$), and the level of pain was not associated with the level of stress. However, the level of stress was associated with the duration of menstrual bleeding ($p=0.003$).

Conclusion: Concern towards managing menstrual irregularities need to be expanded to minimize stress level and enhance work performance and quality of life.