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Knowledge and attitudes regarding menstrual hygiene among students of Jaffna National College of Education

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Background and objective: In Sri Lanka, knowledge and attitudes regarding menstrual hygiene remain suboptimal as literature suggests. As future educators, having better knowledge and attitudes on menstrual hygiene is crucial to shape young minds. This research studies on assessing the knowledge and attitudes regarding menstrual hygiene among students of Jaffna National College of Education.

Methods: An institutional-based descriptive cross-sectional study conducted among 339 students of Jaffna National College of Education in the period from 09th August 2024 to 30th November 2024. Data was collected by using self-administered questionnaires. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and descriptive data were displayed in percentages, proportions and tables. Chi-square test and one-way ANOVA test were used to analyse the association between variables.

Results: All 339 students responded (response rate 100%). The majority were females (84.4%), Hindu by religion (64%), and belonged to the arts stream (51.6%). Only 9.7% of participants demonstrated good knowledge of menstrual hygiene, while 85.5% had average and 4.8% poor knowledge. A significant association was found between knowledge and sex ($p=0.005$), with females showing higher knowledge levels. However, no significant association was observed between knowledge and educational stream ($p=0.131$). Regarding attitudes, 68.4% of the participants expressed positive attitudes toward menstrual hygiene, 24.2% were neutral, and 7.4% had negative attitudes. Students with higher knowledge scores demonstrated more favourable attitudes ($p=0.012$).

Conclusion: Knowledge and attitudes regarding menstrual hygiene among students were moderate, with clear gender and discipline-related variations. Higher knowledge levels (Science related streams) were associated with more favourable attitudes, emphasizing the need to strengthen menstrual health education within teacher training curricula. Integrating structured educational programs and promoting open discussions can improve awareness and attitudes, helping future teachers guide younger generations toward healthy menstrual practices.

Keywords: menstrual hygiene, knowledge, attitudes, Teaching College students, Jaffna National College of Education