

# Menstrual Knowledge in Young Women (Ethnographic Studies in Kampung Aur Village,, Medan Maimun District, Medan City, North Sumatra Province)

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**Abstract:** This study examines how the knowledge and behavior of adolescents in Aur village are related to menstruation. The purpose of the study is to describe young women's knowledge and behavior during menstruation. Whether there is an environmental influence on adolescent social behavior, how parents play in providing menstrual education to their daughters, and how the rules exist in society limit young women's sexual behavior. The research method used in this study is a qualitative approach. With pre-field research, fieldwork, data analysis, and ending with the writing phase of the research report. The result of the study is that menstruation is understood as something related to maintaining the cleanliness of reproductive organs to avoid disease. The conversation about menstruation also concerns sexual intercourse conducted by men and women. Usually, parents give education in the form of straightforward advice due to the limitations of parents who do not know much about reproductive health. Meanwhile, the local community also gives moral reaction in the form of censure, syndicate for deviant young women.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

According to Indrawanti and Sadjimin (2002), adolescence is an essential time for individual reproductive life, because at that time, a teenager formed the foundation of his reproductive life. It is supported by Hurlock opinion (1990), teen means growing into adulthood. According to Monks et al. (2004) the age limit of adolescence is between 12-15 years of early adolescence, 15-18 years of middle adolescence, and 18-21 years of late adolescence, with the characteristics of

1. Muscles getting more significant and more durable, especially in the middle and towards the end of puberty, thus giving shape to the shoulders, arms and legs;
2. Change in voice, more melodious;
3. The rate of development in general decreases very slowly;
4. The proportion of height and weight size is to the strength of the adult body;
5. Reproductive organs are ready to function as adults.

Menstruation is every woman's problem every month. This problem around menstruation or menstruation

has been around since man was created. Maybe now we are rethinking what it was like for women to overcome bleeding during menstruation? Are there any tools to solve this problem? Of course, there is! People always have the sense to solve the problem. Although limited, they have their ways of addressing this one woman's problem and starting from using leaves, cotton, to other materials.

Kartono (1986) states that the menstrual process will usually take place every month when the inner life of women and the psychic climate of the environment is standard and calm. Conversely, suppose a woman's inner life is tangled and the environment is chaotic. In that case, there will be a variety of psychosomatic symptoms (deviations and psychic disorders that cause the onset of disorders in physical health) that are strictly related to menstruation in women.

Therefore, during menstruation women should be able to maintain the cleanliness of reproductive organs "extra" especially in the vaginal part, because otherwise it is kept clean, will cause microorganisms to excess to interfere with the function of reproductive organs (PKBI DIY, 2000)

One of the most emphasized for women who are menstruating is the maintenance of self-hygiene. To maintain cleanliness and health, ideally the use of sanitary pads during menstruation should be replaced regularly 2 to 3 times a day or once every 4 hours, especially if it is numerous. After bathing or urinating, the vagina should be dried with a tissue or towel so as not to moisten. Also, the wearing of underwear should be a material made of sweat-absorbing easily (PKBI DIY, 2000). While According to Solita (1993), hygienic is knowledge, attitude and proactive action to maintain and prevent the risk of disease, protect yourself from the threat of disease.

One of the phenomena of adolescent hygienic behavior during menstruation is still low, shown by a Widyantoro study on menstrual hygiene in female hospital visitors in Subang and Tangerang (N=305) revealed that most (77.5% in Tangerang and 68.3% in Subang) have poor menstrual hygiene status. In terms of individual hygiene, there are still respondents who are wrong in washing their genitals from back to front (20.1 % on weekdays and 19.8% during menstruation). This study showed that respondents in Subang showed that menstrual hygiene tended to be higher than respondents in Tangerang.

The study results have stated that the lack of hygienic behavior during menstruation can lead to various diseases such as uterine cancer. According to some studies, this cancer is caused by human papillomavirus (HPV). In part, that appears because of the frequent behavior of changing sex partners and unhygienic behaviors during menstruation. The virus lives in moist areas, precisely in a vaginal fluid dropped by the whitish sufferer (leukorrhea). If this whiteness does not improve immediately, this virus can give rise to uterine cancer.

Usually this condition is characterized by a large amount of whitish fluid accompanied by unpleasant odors and bleeding coming out of the vagina. But there are times when the cancer that appears does not give such symptoms of pain. Sexual intercourse under the age of 17 can also stimulate the growth of cancer cells. Why? Because in the age range of 12 years to 17 years, cell changes in the mouth of the uterus are very active. When cells are actively splitting (metaplasia), ideally there is no contact or stimulation of any kind from the outside, including the entry of foreign bodies in the female body. The absence of foreign objects, including male genitalia and sperm cells, will result in the development of cells in abnormal directions.

Especially if there is a wound that results in an infection in the uterus.

Abnormal cells in the mouth of the uterus (cervix uteri) can attack the female womb, starting from the mouth of the uterus, and are at risk of spreading to the vagina until it comes out. The abnormal cells can also spread to other organs in the body, such as the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, kidneys, lungs, livers, bones to the brain. If it has reached an advanced stage and spreads to other organs of the body, uterine cancer can lead to death..

This cancer can also be caused by nicotine in the blood. Why? Because the cigarette smoke that enters the body will immediately penetrate into the blood that spreads throughout the body. And whoever is in the blood, he will stay in all parts of the body, including the mouth of the uterus and the membranes of the cervix, which are very sensitive to nicotine. The nicotine will trigger abnormal cell growth which then becomes the cause of the appearance of uterine mouth cancer cells. Later there was also the issue that the cancer was caused by intercourse while a woman was menstruating (Herawati, 2008).

Research conducted by Dalton (Rakhmayanti, 2002), over the past twenty years shows that more than half of the female population in the United States, Britain and France report menstrual changes causing psychological or physical disorders. In fact they may suffer from various subtype strains of premenstrual syndrome. Mood swings are most felt by women in the days before menstruation comes and subsides when menstruation arrives. Symptoms include weight gain, chest pain, headache, migraines, aches and pains, skin disorders and excessive appetite. Psychological symptoms include tension, rapid anger, depression, lethargy, and reduced concentration.

Hygienic behavior needs to be studied in depth because based on theoretical studies that there is one effort to reduce the disorder during menstruation is to familiarize yourself with hygienic behavior. However, hygienic behavior during menstruation will not just happen, but it is a process studied because individuals understand the positive or negative impact of a behavior associated with the menstrual state (Syaifuddin, 2002). If the young woman performs hygienic behavior during menstruation then will avoid uterine cancer, feel comfortable doing daily activities, be confident, excited and not lazy anymore, not be shunned by friends because of fishy body odor and do not believe the myths circulating in society because they already understand the truth. Whereas if the hygienic behavior is not carried out then the young woman is less concerned about the

cleanliness of her reproductive tools, does not maintain appearance and health during menstruation, can get uterine cancer, whiteness, reduce activity during menstruation because of lazy, lacking confidence, believing in the myths surrounding menstruation circulating in society, shunned by friends because of fishy body odor (Sulaiha, 2000).

Menstrual hygiene is most likely influenced by the level of knowledge about reproductive health. It was as conveyed by Windayanti (2007), that a person who does not have sufficient knowledge of reproductive health will tend to ignore reproductive health and in the end he will have harmful actions for himself. Then a person who has knowledge of reproductive health will choose the right behavior, meaning that the behavior will be able to maintain the quality or condition of its reproductive health. If it is related to menstruation then that will be selected..

According to Morgan (Utami, 2003) parents, especially mothers, are expected to be able to provide precise and correct information about whether menstruation is so that teenage girls will feel ready when getting menstruation the first time. As said by Astuti (2003) that education around menstruation affects girls' readiness towards adolescence to face menarche. One way is to provide education around menstruation. Then, if the individual knows what to do when experiencing the same condition, for example how to cope with the menstrual blood loss that can occur at any time, how to wear and wash sanitary pads, and how to self-care during menstruation, then it can be expected that the individual behaves hygienically when experiencing menstruation..

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that hygienic behavior during menstruation is an activity /activity carried out by women to maintain or improve health in the event of bleeding caused by decay of the uterine wall as a result of the absence of fertilization. Maka can be formulated the problem is "Does any teenager know about reproductive health about menstruation in Aur village?". Therefore, researcher took the title: "Young Women's Reproductive Health Knowledge About Menstruation (Ethnographic Study in Kampung Aur Village Medan Maimun sub-district of Medan City)".

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

This research is qualitative research with an ethnographic approach. The authors observed the behavior, habits, and way of life of the subjects

studied so that they could understand what was happening and experienced by the research subject holistically and the results of that observation were poured in the form of words and language, in one scientific context. By using various techniques such as participation observation, wa wancaratechnique, studi and literature studies.. The qualitative approach considers that meaning is an integral part of one's experience in social life with others (Bungin, 2011: 23). This research was conducted to find out and see the reality that occurs in the lives of young women in Kampung Aur related to sexual behavior related to reproductive health.

The data collection technique used is an observational technique of participation in the daily activities of young women in this area, such as gathering with their families and establishing kinship with teenagers and their parents, as well as interview techniques. For library data obtained from books, journals, articles, thesis and some data sourced from print and electronic media related to the issue of reproductive health knowledge of young women regarding menstruation in Aur village..

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Menstruation, menstruation or coming months are physiological changes in a woman's body that occur periodically and are affected by reproductive hormones either FSH-Estrogen or LH-Progesterone. This period is important in terms of reproduction. In humans, this usually occurs every month between adolescence and menopause. In women the average menstrual cycle occurs about 28 days, although this is common, but not all women have the same menstrual cycle, sometimes the cycle occurs every 21 days to 30 days. Usually, menstruation on average occurs 5 days, sometimes menstruation can also occur about 2 days to 7 days at most 15 days. If the blood comes out more than 15 days then it includes blood disease.

The first menstrual cycle occurs in teenage girls as they enter puberty, usually beginning at the age of 12 years or about 2-3 years after the breasts begin to grow. The first period can sometimes come sooner or later. Some have been experiencing it since about the age of 8 and some have only experienced it over the age of 12. However, most teenage girls already experience regular menstruation at the age of 16 to 18.

In the menstrual cycle, changes in hormone levels in the female body will occur (especially in the period before menstruation). Changing amounts of hormones can affect the physique and emotions that

can sometimes appear days before menstruation. These symptoms are called premenstrual syndrome (PMS). A number of physical and emotional changes that usually appear before menstruation are tiredness, headache, flatulence, sensitive breasts, weight gain due to fluid buildup, muscle and joint pain, diarrhea or constipation, acne appears. While the emotional changes experienced are depression, frequent mood swings, unstable mood, difficulty concentration, easy crying, insomnia, changes in appetite, excessive anxiety, decreased confidence, decreased sex drive. While menstruating, women will experience bleeding from the vagina for approximately 2 days to a week with an average blood volume of about 30-70 milliliters. But there are some women who dispense more blood.

As for the behavior of young women during the first period such as the speech of informant Herni (16 years) that she first got her menstruation feeling anxious and shocked because of the blood coming out of her reproductive device. After telling his parents, his parents told him that he had entered adolescence and had to be careful in hanging out with male friends. When he first used softex sanitary pads like advertisements on tv and hygienic because of disposable. Based on information from his parents, he thinks the use of sanitary pads can make the role dry so it will be difficult to have offspring. In addition, he also replaces softex up to 3 times a day because it is not replaced, but cleaned first with water.

Knowledge about reproductive health is usually gained from the internet as well as science books. According to informant Meymey (17 years), reproductive health concerns the relationship between male and female. Male sperm cells meet and engage female eggs in the female uterus then there is fertilization that results in the child. While according to Nadya informant (16 years), reproductive health how individuals maintain and care for intimate organs to be clean and free from diseases such as HIV, scabies and other diseases. From the interview above, some adolescents interpret reproductive health as an issue that concerns sexual activity between men and women and how to keep their reproductive organs clean even there are some other teenagers who are about 12 to 15 not yet understood even new to hear the word reproductive health.

Teenage girls in this area are generally advised about their relationship restrictions after they have their first menstrual period from a parent. They consider that parents lack in-depth knowledge of reproductive health-related issues influenced by limited parental education. Like the informant (Ayu, 21 years old) that her parents only forbade her from

dating now. They rarely even discuss the changes and reproductive development of their daughters.

#### **a. Factors Affecting Adolescent Reproductive Health**

The factors that affect the health of the body as well as the reproductive health of women in Kampung Aur area based on the research that researchers conducted are:

- **Environmental Factors**

Researchers looked at the environment around the settlements of residents who are often hit by flooding in their clean water problems is very difficult to get clean water, so they go to bathe on the side of the Deli River right behind the house of the resident, where the river water is already very polluted various feces that residents throw carelessly into the river, even in the river the residents defecate, and the water is not good for health that can cause diseases such as skin diseases.

- **Teen Social Factors**

In this area is inhabited by teenagers aged 12 to 18 years. In their development, they pay more attention to themselves, be it self-deflating and tend not to care about others like parents. They prefer to spend time with peers compared to their own families. Adolescent relationships contribute to affecting their reproductive health, this is due to adolescents who, in their development, tend to be more comfortable telling peers everything they experience, especially when it comes to changes that occur in them than to parents.

One of the adaptations that teenagers emulate is the dating style. Information obtained from friends' stories without screening for true or false information, coupled with sexual urges due to hormones developing in the body, ultimately leads adolescents who do not have this experience to early sexual behavior and can go wrong such as holding hands, hugging, kissing, even groping breasts or perhaps more than that. According to informant Dini (14 years), sometimes he sees his friends dating and they like to share experiences about dating and talking about their respective guys. His friends also want to introduce him to a guy.

- **Education Factors**

According to the informant Ibu Nita (38 years), she was very eager to send her son to college to become a "person" unlike himself who was just a junior high school student. In this area young women are more likely to attend school than young men - where young men prefer to travel or work. With education, women can have a more mature insight

into what is right and what is not, especially when it comes to reproductive health.

- **Economic Factors**

In Kampung Aur Village, many adults and their daughters spend a long time working at home not only domestic work but additional jobs such as selling fried and wet pastries to meet their life needs. So have little time to take care of yourself especially in the matter of hygiene of the body and reproductive organs. They only clean themselves because of their work and also the dirty environment especially when it is flooded, their housing will be inundated with mud from the river.

- **Cultural Factors**

In general, the residents in Kampung Aur Village are Muslim. But in the teachings of Christianity there are also rules that limit human sexual behavior. There is a 7th decree that says "do not commit adultery". Kenyataan today has many teenagers having sex at a relatively young age which causes adolescents to experience reproductive health risks.. In this area there is also the same thing, according to the story of a mother, her child is pregnant out of wedlock due to the negligence of a mother controlling her child, they are classified as relatively young at the age of a dozen years.. In addition, the youth in this area are some who are less participating in religious groups. This is because they are less interested in those things..

In the research area of peneliti, teenagers usually prefer to meet their girlfriends at night. This is because they do their daily activities during the day such as school or do homework so that at night they have time. This tendency can allow them to behave sexually wrong such as kissing, hugging, groping breasts, or anything else.. In terms of dating, some teenagers in this area still keep the relationship from going too far at the level of sexual intercourse. Because they know basically sexual intercourse can lead to pregnancy.

#### **b. Adolescent Behavior towards Health**

**First,** to the health of the body. According to Herny (16 years), hidup healthy it by eating nutritious foods without preservatives, eating fruits, eating vegetables, drinking 8 glasses of water daily, regular exercise, eating regularly, bathing 2 times a day.

**Second,** to reproductive health. Teenagers in this area maintain body hygiene by bathing and using soap. Given the poor water condition, they are forced to use the water for bathing and locks when defecating or urinating which is very likely germs enter and cause hives, and blisters. During menstruation, most teenagers only use sanitary pads or cloths and diligently clean them with water.

Reproductive health is not only by maintaining the cleanliness of reproductive organs but also concerning the behavioral problems of adolescents with opponents of jenis. Like the informant Ani (pseudonym) of a 3rd grade junior high school teen, that she was dating just like any other teen, ngobrol, handrail, kiss, until groping breasts, but now not anymore. And when asked why he would do that, he simply replied it was okay to laugh.

#### **c. The Role of Parents and Society in Maintaining The Pattern of Youth Behavior in Kampung Aur Village**

**First,** parental roles. For those with economic limitations, they have to work hard to meet the demands of life, such as the cost of meals, household necessities, child school fees, and others. As said by the informant Ibu Nita (38) where she early morning sells cake and her son is still with his father at home because he entered school during the day. She never tires of advising her children not to hang out with men, be diligent and focus on school just yet. Her son did listen but ignored her and five minutes later left without permission to the parents. While according to the informant Herny (16 years), her mother tends to talk about teenage friendships often advise her not to date first, do not get it wrong, if pregnant she is not considered a child or anything, so she is lazy to tell about parenthood..

**Second,** the role of society. People tend to be less restricted when it comes to reproductive issues. The public's concern about the courtship behavior of local teenagers is less noticed, the public is more interested in talking about the disgraces that occur in teenagers.. But in the event of sexual harassment by teenagers, society also provides a resistance to the perpetrator such as abuse, beatings, and other acts of violence to the perpetrator. For deviant teenage boys, usually society gives a resing in the form of beatings, beatings, even perpetrators handed over to the police. Wherea if young women deviate from existing norms, society tends to give moral resicance in the form of innuendo, ridicule, and spreading the negative news from the mouth- mouth. It is from such information that parents often advise their daughters to be more careful in maintaining their relationships with male friends.

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Then, the natural framework to keep the reproductive system functioning optimally, avoid consumption:

1. Caffeine, where the impact can be a decreased fertility when consumed in large quantities.
2. Sugar, where the consumption of foods and beverages containing excess sugar will affect blood sugar and energy levels.
3. Alcohol can lead to a loss of chance of conceiving as much as 50% of other normal women.
4. Certain carbohydrates, where fast-digested carbohydrates k such as white rice and potatoes, can quickly affect blood sugar so that it is not right in reproductive health.
5. Processed foods contain trans fats, such as junk food.
6. Excess pesticide content, where pesticides can be found in certain types of drinking water that have been contaminated, pay attention to the source of the origin of the water and should boil the water before drinking.

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