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The Relationship between Parental Support and Personal Hygiene Behavior during Menstruation in Early Adolescent Girls: a Cross Sectional Study

Maysaroh Nuril Hasanah¹, Irwina Angelia Silvanasari^{2*}

^{1,2} Universitas dr. Soebandi, Indonesia

*Correspondence: Irwina Angelia Silvanasari

Email: irwinaangelia@uds.ac.id

Abstract

Introduction: Many young adolescent girls still have poor personal hygiene practices. Parental support is crucial in shaping personal hygiene practices in adolescents who are just starting to menstruate. The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between parental support and personal hygiene practices during menstruation in young adolescent girls.

Methods: This study was designed using a correlational approach with a cross-sectional approach. The population was 32 fifth and sixth grade female students at SDN 1 Lamongan, Situbondo, with a total sample of 32 students drawn from total sampling. The independent variable was parental support, and personal hygiene practices served as the dependent variable. The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire on personal hygiene practices and parental support, which has been validated and reliable. The analysis used frequency distributions for categorical data and assessed the mean, median, and standard deviation for numerical data. Bivariate analysis was conducted to test the relationship between the two variables using the gamma test.

Results: Most respondents (86.8%) received moderate parental support, and most respondents (65.6%) had adequate levels of support. The gamma test results showed a p-value $(0.001) < \alpha (0.05)$.

Conclusions: There is a relationship between parental support and personal hygiene behavior during menstruation in early adolescent girls. High parental support tends to improve personal hygiene behavior. Early adolescent girls should practice good personal hygiene behavior during menstruation. Parents should provide support through open communication, accurate and clear information, menstrual products, and positive praise.

Keywords: early adolescents, menstruation, parental support, personal hygiene behavior

Introduction

Personal hygiene practices during menstruation among adolescent girls are still relatively low. This may be because the majority of society considers menstruation a very private matter and is rarely discussed in public or taught openly. Information about menstruation and proper personal hygiene practices, such as changing sanitary pads and avoiding tight pants during menstruation, is crucial for adolescent girls. Puberty begins between the ages of 10 and 12, marked by menstruation in adolescent girls. Puberty can bring many changes, including

feelings of anxiety. Most children their age do not yet understand how to maintain hygiene during menstruation, especially among elementary school children (Susanti & Lutfiyati, 2020).

Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that the incidence of poor personal hygiene behavior during menstruation in the world is still relatively high, where 50% of them still do not take care of their reproductive organs properly. As many as 5.2 million adolescent girls in Indonesia still often experience complaints such as itching during menstruation due to not maintaining their health (Kemenkes RI, 2022). A preliminary study conducted at SDN 1 Lamongan, Situbondo Regency, on November 20, 2024, on 10 menstruating female students found that 8 (80%) students did not practice proper personal hygiene, such as not changing their sanitary napkins regularly every 4-6 hours, 3 (30%) changed their sanitary napkins when they were full, and 30% experienced leaks through their underwear. 7 (70%) of them still made mistakes when washing their genitals, stating that they should wash from back to front, while the correct method is from front to back slowly.

The Health Promotion Model (HPM) theory by Nola Pender states that behavior can be influenced by several factors, one of which is parental support. Individuals will tend to be committed to and engage in health-promoting behavior if their families model such behavior. Families are an important resource for enhancing health-promoting behavior (Noorratri et al., 2025). Overall, parental support is crucial in shaping personal hygiene behaviors in adolescents experiencing menstruation, through support and past experiences, especially support from mothers due to gender similarities and their own experiences. Parental support is essential to guide their daughters in caring for themselves, especially during menstruation (Avianty, 2020).

Poor personal hygiene habits during menstruation can lead to reproductive tract infections. These poor personal hygiene habits include changing sanitary pads less than four times a day and changing underwear less than twice a day. Poor vaginal hygiene during menstruation can trigger bacterial growth and lead to reproductive health risks such as infections, cystitis, endometriosis, and even cervical cancer (Sunarti & Mutmainnah Kamaruddin, 2023). Poor personal hygiene during menstruation can have two impacts: psychosocial and physical. Psychosocial impacts include disruptions to social interaction, self-actualization, self-esteem, comfort, and the need for love and affection. Physical impacts include vaginal discharge, urinary tract infections, and can also lead to other reproductive health issues (Rizky Fadilasani et al., 2023).

Efforts to address problems that occur during menstruation include maintaining good personal hygiene. How to maintain vaginal hygiene by washing from front to back carefully with clean water, then afterward wiping the vagina with a soft towel. This is useful to prevent

the growth of fungus due to excessive moisture. The second method is to change underwear at least twice a day, change sanitary napkins 4-5 times a day, clean the genitals before changing sanitary napkins, maintain genital hair hygiene because pubic hair that is too long can cause menstrual blood to clot and become a breeding ground for fungi and bacteria. Genital hair care by shaving pubic hair with scissors is recommended for a maximum of 40 days. Wash your hands before and after changing sanitary napkins, wear loose underwear to absorb sweat, it is recommended to choose sanitary napkins made of soft and absorbent materials so that they do not leak through the pants (Mawarti et al., 2023). The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between parental support and personal hygiene behavior during menstruation in early adolescent girls.

Methods

This research method is correlational with a cross-sectional approach. This research was conducted at SDN 1 Lamongan, Arjasa District, Situbondo Regency, on February 19, 2025. The population in this study were 32 female students in grades 5 and 6 who had already menstruated, with a sample size of 32 respondents. The technique used was total sampling because it took all female students who had already menstruated. The total sampling was chosen considering the limited number of respondents. The inclusion criteria in this study were: 1) Active female students who were willing to participate, 2) Respondents' guardians agreed to sign informed consent, 3) Respondents living with their parents, and 4) Respondents who had already menstruated. Exclusion criteria: Respondents who were not present during the study.

The research variables consisted of parental support as the independent variable and personal hygiene behavior as the dependent variable. The instrument used to measure parental support uses a questionnaire with indicators: emotional support, information support, instrumental support, assessment support, a total of 25 questions with the results of parental support will be divided into low categories if the answer score is 25-41, moderate if the answer score is 42-58, high if the answer score is 59-75. This instrument is valid and reliable with an r table value of 0.361 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.932. The instrument used to measure personal hygiene behavior uses a questionnaire with indicators: use of underwear, use of sanitary napkins, facial skin and hair cleanliness, a total of 22 questions with the results of personal hygiene behavior will be divided into poor categories if the answer score is 22-36, sufficient if the answer score is 37-51, good if the answer score is 52-66. This instrument is valid and reliable with an r table value of 0.361 with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.796. Bivariate analysis in this study uses frequency distribution for categorical data and assesses the mean,

median, standard deviation for numerical data. Bivariate analysis is conducted to test the relationship between 2 variables using the gamma test because this test is ordinal by ordinal. This research has been ethically approved by KEPK Universitas dr. Soebandi Jember with letter number: 1041/KEPK/UDS/V/2025 on May 16, 2025.

Results

The following is a description of the results of data analysis on the relationship between parental support and personal hygiene behavior during menstruation in early adolescent girls.

Table 1. Frequency of Respondent Characteristics Based on Father's Occupation, Mother's Occupation, Father's Education, Mother's Education and Parent's Income

Characteristics of Respondents	Frequency	%
Father's occupation		
Civil Servants (PNS)	10	31.2
Private employees / self-employed	4	12.5
Farmer	18	56.3
Mother's occupation		
Civil Servants (PNS)	4	12.5
Farmer	20	62.5
Doesn't work	8	25.0
Father's Education		
Elementary School	3	9.4
Junior High School	15	46.9
Senior High School	13	40.6
College	1	3.1
Mother's Education		
Elementary School	14	43.7
Junior High School	8	25.0
Senior High School	6	18.8
College	4	12.5
Parents' income		
< Rp. 2.500.000,-	19	59.4
≥ Rp. 2.500.000,-	13	40.6
Total	32	100.0

Table 1 shows that almost half of the respondents' fathers had a junior high school education (46.9%). Most of the respondents' fathers were farmers (56.3%). Almost half of the respondents' mothers had an elementary school education (43.7%). Most of the respondents' mothers worked as farmers (62.5%), and most of the respondents came from lower-middle-class families (59.4%).

Table 2. Description of respondent's age

Characteristics of Respondents	Means	Median	Std. Deviation
Age of respondent (years)	11.8	12.00	0.420

Table 2 shows that the average age of respondents was 11.8 years. The median was 12.00. The age variation in this group was relatively small (SD = 0.420), meaning that their ages were fairly uniform.

Table 3. Description of Parental Support and Personal Hygiene Behavior

Variable	Frequency	%
Parental Support		
Low	6	18.7
Medium	22	68.8
High	4	12.5
Personal Hygiene Behavior		
Poor	6	18.7
Fair	21	65.8
Good	5	15.5
Total	32	100.0

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents 22 (68.8%) received moderate levels of parental support, and the majority of respondents 21 (65.8%) had levels of personal hygiene behavior in the sufficient category.

Table 4. The Relationship Between Parental Support and Personal Hygiene Behavior

Parental Support	Personal Hygiene Behavior						Total	<i>P-value</i>	
	Poor		Fair		Good				
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N		%
Low	5	83,3	1	6,7	0	0,0	6	100,0	0,001
Medium	1	4,5	20	90,9	1	4,5	22	100,0	
High	0	0,00	0	0,00	4	100	4	100,0	
Total	6	18,8	21	65,6	5	15,6	32	100,0	

Table 4 shows that p value (0.001) < a (0.05) then H_0 is accepted, namely there is a significant relationship between parental support and personal hygiene behavior with the conclusion that if parental support is high, personal hygiene behavior tends to be good.

Discussion

Parental Support

Most parental support is categorized as moderate, meaning that parental support is quite optimal. Parents provide sufficient emotional support, teach open communication, and listen to their children's concerns. Informational support includes providing accurate and clear knowledge about proper personal hygiene practices. Instrumental support involves providing menstrual products, such as sanitary napkins and other essentials. Appraisal support includes providing positive praise to children to help them feel comfortable and confident during their menstrual cycle.

One factor contributing to moderate parental support is parental education. Parent education is one of the most common approaches to prevent child maltreatment and promote family functioning and child development. Parents with higher education are trained in effective communication, listening to and responding to their children's needs, thus creating stronger relationships (Morris et al., 2020). Most fathers' education levels are junior high or high school; fathers with knowledge about personal hygiene can help educate daughters about the importance of maintaining personal hygiene during menstruation. Supportive and open fathers can help daughters feel more comfortable and confident in seeking advice or assistance. Most mothers' education levels are elementary school, which is considered a low level of education. Low levels of education can lead to limited knowledge. Parental education impacts their ability to provide support, such as empathy or encouragement, providing information, providing access to services, and offering positive praise to children.

Another factor contributing to moderate levels of parental support is parental occupation. Parents' jobs, which require extensive time or long, irregular working hours, can limit parental involvement in their children's lives, resulting in less attention from their children. Parental occupation also significantly impacts the support they provide. Lack of time to help children can lead to low levels of parental support. In this study, moderate levels of parental support were found because the majority of parents were farmers. Farming often requires significant time and energy. This can also limit the time available for parents to participate in their children's daily activities.

Parental income is also an important factor in moderate levels of parental support. Low-income parents can hinder various aspects of support provided to children, such as providing complete products and facilities. Many activities that benefit children, such as quality education, require significant costs. Financial constraints can prevent children from participating and make it difficult to achieve their desired goals. Most parents have lower-

middle incomes. Having sufficient income but numerous needs can make it difficult for parents to provide better facilities.

Personal Hygiene Behavior

Most personal hygiene behaviors were considered adequate. Adequate personal hygiene behaviors indicate that early adolescent girls' behaviors during menstruation, such as wearing underwear, indicate that they are adequate in choosing underwear that absorbs sweat and is comfortable to wear. They also use menstrual products, such as using sanitary napkins correctly, changing them every 4-6 hours to prevent leakage. They also clean the genital area, avoiding harsh soaps to prevent infection and irritation. This is considered optimal.

Age is a factor in personal hygiene behavior, as evidenced by previous research, which found that early adolescent girls who have just started menstruating lack sufficient knowledge about how to maintain personal hygiene during menstruation, which can influence their personal hygiene behaviors. Early adolescents still rely on others for information and guidance on how to maintain good personal hygiene (Akbar, 2020). Most respondents in early adolescence are still very unstable, having just started menstruating, so their personal hygiene behaviors are adequate, meaning neither poor nor excellent. Personal hygiene behaviors that may pose risks, such as not changing sanitary napkins regularly, not washing hands before changing sanitary napkins, and not properly cleaning the genital area, can increase the risk of infection and other reproductive health problems.

Parental education is a factor contributing to inadequate personal hygiene behaviors. Low parental education can lead to a lack of knowledge in children, while those with higher education tend to have better knowledge about the importance of personal hygiene. They are more likely to teach their children good hygiene practices. Children often imitate their parents' behavior; if parents do not practice good hygiene, their children may not understand the importance of maintaining proper personal hygiene behaviors. Most fathers' education levels are junior high or high school, while most mothers' education levels are only elementary school. This leads to limited knowledge regarding reproductive health, which can result in inadequate personal hygiene behaviors in their daughters. Parents with higher education tend to have better knowledge about reproductive health and therefore can provide accurate information to their daughters.

Parental income can also be a factor in inadequate personal hygiene behaviors. Previous research has shown that socioeconomic conditions significantly impact personal hygiene behavior in adolescents. It is important to raise parental awareness about providing adequate

access to health and hygiene resources for children experiencing menstruation to prevent health-threatening issues (Akbar, 2020). In this study, most respondents had parents with low- to middle-income families, which can hinder parents from providing adequate menstrual products or facilities.

The Relationship Between Parental Support and Personal Hygiene Behavior

The research found a significant relationship between parental support and personal hygiene behavior. High parental support leads to better personal hygiene behavior. The Health Promotion Model explains that interpersonal influence is one factor influencing a person's behavior. Family is one of the factors influencing an individual's health-related behavior. Family support plays a crucial role in an individual's health behavior (Alligood, 2017). Family support encompasses emotional support, informational support, instrumental support, and appraisal support. Emotional support includes parents discussing genital hygiene during menstruation, which can impact their child's personal hygiene behavior. Informational support, for example, requires parents to explain the importance of cleaning the genital area during menstruation, thus providing young adolescent girls with knowledge of proper personal hygiene practices. Instrumental support, for example, requires parents to provide menstrual products, such as sanitary napkins, which can influence the personal hygiene behavior of young adolescent girls during menstruation. Appraisal support involves parents providing assistance and encouragement rather than criticism. Positive praise helps young adolescent girls feel comfortable and confident in practicing personal hygiene during menstruation. Schools can also facilitate education about the importance of parental support for their daughters regarding personal hygiene behavior during menstruation. This education can be provided during parenting activities or other activities, such as report card receptions, as one way schools contribute to student health.

This study's limitations include its limited sample of young adolescent girls at one school. It also focused on only one factor influencing behavior based on the Health Promotion Model, namely parental support, as the independent variable. Several other variables also influence personal hygiene behavior during menstruation.

Conclusion

Most respondents received moderate parental support, most personal hygiene behavior was in the sufficient category, and there was a relationship between parental support and personal hygiene behavior during menstruation in early adolescent girls. If parental support

was high, personal hygiene behavior tended to be good. Early adolescent girls should understand the importance of maintaining personal hygiene during menstruation and how to practice proper personal hygiene. Their families should provide significant support for their daughters' personal hygiene. Schools can also facilitate education about the importance of parental support for their daughters regarding personal hygiene behavior during menstruation.

Author Contributions

The first author prepared the proposal and collected data. The second author served as corresponding author and prepared the research manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors stated there was no conflict of interest in the study

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request

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