

ASCERTAINING THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS TOWARDS THE DETERMINANTS OF DELAYED MENSTRUAL PERIOD AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH-SOUTH

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Abstract

Menstrual period is a natural and physiological process that occur regularly or irregularly every month in a woman that have attained puberty. Some interference may cause the monthly menstrual period to be delayed. Some could also occur after six months. Awareness of the determinants of delayed menstrual period is crucial to the young adolescence and young ladies because it actually let them know what could be the possible cause of delay menstrual period when they find themselves in such conditions. The aim of this study is to evaluate The Level of Awareness About the Determinants of Delayed Menstrual Period Among Students of Tertiary Institutions in South-South. The study was a cross-sectional study and a total of 250 female students participated in the study. A well-structured questionnaire was distributed to each participant by the research assistant after consent was granted by the participants. The study was carried out in the six States that make up South-South Geopolitical Zones and it lasted for a period of 3 months (1st April to 30th June, 2023). Data was analyzed with SPSS version 26 and P value < 0.05 was considered significant. The study shows that the students were within 100 level to 600 levels respectively. The study revealed that 96.10% of the students are not aware of the determinants of delayed menstrual period, 98.00% have not had any sex education and 95.6% of the students have not have enlightenment campaigngh.

Keywords: Ascertaining, Level, Awareness, Determinants, Delayed.

Introduction

Menstrual period is a natural process that occur monthly in a female after the attainment of puberty and it is the pride of a woman. This natural process is stimulated and aided by hypothamo-pituitary-gonadal axis (HPGA) and any disruption in this pathway will interfere with the normal menstrual flow and if this happened then, it becomes a problem with the lady in question (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). The hypothalamus produces the gonadotropin releasing hormone that function to stimulate the anterior pituitary gland to produce the gonadotropic hormones (Folliclestimulating hormone (FSH) and Luteinizing hormone (LH) which enhance the follicular growth and then lead to ovulation (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). However, delayed in having this normal process every monthly is a concern (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). Several factors may be responsible for delayed menstrual period experienced by females (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). Every healthy woman who has attained the age of puberty must experience monthly menstrual period. Regular monthly flow with no abnormality is the pride of a woman. Certain environmental, social and medical factors may hinder or interfere with the regular monthly flow, thereby causing delayed or cessation of the menstrual period. However, when a woman-experiences delayed or cessation of her menstrual period at a





point when she was not expecting, she becomes worried or psychologically destabilized. Disruption in the gonadotropic hormones may lead to anovulation and this may induce delay in menstrual period. However, students in tertiary institutions are facing delayed in their monthly menstrual period and this call for concern among them and their peers. This delayed could be attributed to certain factors that may not be known to the students unless certain radiological or laboratory investigations are carry out to ascertain the cause of the delay (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2024). This cycle varies in individual in duration of flow, length of cycle, pattern of flow (scanty, moderate or heavy with or without clot). Virtually every woman who have attained puberty and she has started menstrual period will experience certain physiological changes in her body. These changes may occur before or during the menstrual cycle (Gbaranor, *et al.*, 2022). The length and regularity of menstrual cycles reflect changes in ovarian steroid production (Kato *et al.*, 1999; Harlow SD and Ephross SA, 1995). If an undetected pregnancy and loss occurs, menstrual cycle length may be misclassified if selfreported information is used alone (Harlow SD and Matanoski GM, 1991). Physical activity of many hours per week has been shown to be associated with an increased cycle length, which could be due to a dampening of FSH pulses during the luteal follicular transition, leading to delayed maturation of the next cohort of follicles (Akaike H. A, 1974; De Souza, *et al.*, 1997). The major cause of menstrual cycle irregularity is functional hypothalamic amenorrhea linked with reduced gonadotropin-releasing hormone secretion and hypothalamic–pituitary– adrenal (HPA) axis dysregulation (Reindollar, *et al.*, 1986; Loucks AB and Thuma JR, 2014; Liu JH, 1990; Berga S and Naftolin F, 2012). Study, revealed that smoking could cause hypoestrogenism (Westhoff, *et al.*, 1996) and high stress has been demonstrated to affect the HPA axis activity (Westhoff, *et al.*, 2014). The study revealed that the participants experienced several psychological effects as a result of delayed in their menstrual period (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2023) The finding shows that 97.20% of the respondents were depressed due to delayed in their menstrual period. As such, this condition could affect them psychologically. Also, 96.00% of the participants isolated themselves due to delayed in their menstrual period (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2023) This isolation might be due to the fact that the participants may be wondering what is really responsible for the delayed. Again, majority of the participants were ashamed of themselves and could not boldly speak out (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2023) The research revealed that greater percentage of the of the participants have their level of thinking distorted due to delayed in their menstrual period (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2023). Previous study by Gbaranor *et al.*, (2023) revealed that delayed in menstrual period affected majority (96.00%) of the participants' academic performance. In the study participants were students and they were confused why they were not seeing their period and this alone could affect their level of intelligence (Gbaranor *et al.*, (2023). Also, in previous study by Gbaranor *et al.*, (2023) shows that 97.20% of them were worried due to delayed in their menstrual period. The participants were female students who might not know the cause of delay in menstrual period and because they do not know the cause of the delayed, that could be the reason why the participants experienced psychological effects like depression, isolation, ashamed, thinking, worried and poor academic performance (Gbaranor *et al.*, 2023) The moment you are psychologically affected due to certain factors, it's also affect virtually every part of your body and this could have severe consequences such as drug abuse and drop-out of school.

When you are facing psychological problem due to unwanted issue, it could lead to several social vices such as suicide, alcohol consumption, substance abuse, and isolation (Gbaranor et al., (2023).

Materials and Method

This was a cross-sectional study involving 250 female students who were within the age of 18 to 47 years. A well-structured questionnaire was administered to participants. Each participant had one questionnaire to fill appropriately and independently after instructions were given to them by the Research Assistants. The study lasted for a period of 3 months (1st April to 30th June, 2023. Data was analyzed with SPSS version 26 and P value < 0.05 was considered significant.

Inclusion criteria: Were students who are in tertiary Institutions in South-South States, students who have attained menarche age.

Exclusion criteria: Female who are not in tertiary institution

Results

The results revealed that 4(1.60%) of the respondents are aware of determinants of delayed menstrual period and 246(96.10%) are not aware (Table 1), 5(2.00%) agreed that they have attended sex education lectures while 245(98.00%) said no (Table 2), 11(4.40%) of the respondents agreed that they have been enlightened on the causes of menstrual delay while 239(95.6%) said no enlightenment campaign (Table 3). The students revealed most of the respondents were in 100, 200 and 300 levels of study (Table 4).

Table 1: Awareness of the determinants of delayed menstrual period

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Students who are aware	4	1.6
Students who are not aware	246	98.4
Total	250	100

Table 2 Respondents who have attended sex education lecture or seminar on awareness of the determinants of delayed menstrual period

Attendance of Sex Education	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	5	2.0
No	245	98.0
Total	250	100.0

Table 3: Respondents who have enlightenment programme organised by school management, NGO, or Government agencies about the causes of delayed menstrual period

Enlightenment Campaign	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	11	4.4
YES	239	95.6
Total	250	100.0



Table 4. Distribution of Level of Study of Respondents

Level of Study	Frequency	Percentage (%)
100 Level	70	28
200 Level	60	24
300 Level	50	20
400 Level	15	6
500 Level	25	10
600 Level	30	12
Total	250	100.00

Discussion

Menstrual period is a natural and physiological process that occur regularly or irregularly every month in a woman that have attained puberty. Some interference may cause the monthly menstrual period to be delayed. Some could also occur after six months. Awareness of the determinants of delayed menstrual period is crucial to the young adolescence and young ladies because it actually let them know what could be the possible cause of delay menstrual period when they find themselves in such conditions. There is need to advocate for reproductive health in all levels of education across the globe to educate women on things that may be inimical to reproductive health. The results revealed that majority (96.10%) of the respondents (students) are not aware of the determinants of delayed menstrual period whether it is due to physiological or medical (infections, contraceptive pills, etc) factors. Follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), luteinizing hormone (LH), progesterone and oestrogen are reproductive hormones that are responsible for proper and regular menses in females, physiologically. That is to say Hypothalamo-pituitary-gonadal axis (HPGA) is the hormonal pathway that promote regular menstrual cycle in females. However, any disruption in this pathway will affect hormonal balance and thus may cause delayed in menstrual period. Awareness campaign play a pivotal role in ensuring that every person is up to date on information's concerning causes or risk factors may be responsible. This study revealed that these students are not really aware and thus could place the students into dilemma when they find themselves in such situations. Again, 98.00% of the respondents agreed that they have not attended any sex education lecture and thus may not be able to know or be aware of the determinants of delayed menstrual period. Sex education play a vital role in enlighten the female on about the factors that affects reproductive health especially as a student. Sex education will explain those conditions that promote reproductive health and good healthy living. Furthermore, majority of the respondents (95.6%) said no enlightenment campaign have been organized by the Non-governmental Organization (NGO), school management and Government agencies. This study shows that no components of awareness programme have been employed to educate these students on the possible causes of delayed menstrual period among students. Academic environment that was known to educate students on issues that affects their wellbeing are no longer doing the needful and thus, students are deprived from knowing information about reproductive health while in school.

The study revealed that majority of the respondents were in 100, 200 and 300 levels of study and this are students that just entered the higher academic environment and should be properly enlighten or educated about the menstrual cycle an important aspect of female reproductive health.





If this sex education is not properly carried out on this neophyte, they might be a problem, such as unwanted pregnancy, infection, or hormonal imbalance that may be the caused of delayed menstrual period in them. If the students are not aware of the determinants of delayed menstrual period in them, it will affect their academic performance and they will be worried. This agreed in previous study by Gbaranor, et al., (2023) revealed that delayed in menstrual period affected majority (96.00%) of the participants' academic performance and that the participants are students and they are confused why they are not seeing their period and this alone could affect their level of intelligence and 97.20% of them were worried due to delayed in their menstrual period.

Conclusion

Menstrual period is a natural and physiological process that occur regularly or irregularly every month in a woman that have attained puberty. Some interference may cause the monthly menstrual period to be delayed. Some could also occur after six months. Awareness of the determinants of delayed menstrual period is crucial to the young adolescence and young ladies because it actually let them know what could be the possible cause of delay menstrual period when they find themselves in such conditions. However, majority of the respondents in this study are not aware of the determinants of delayed menstrual period and occur mostly in students in 100, 200 and 300 levels of study.

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