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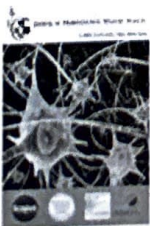
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Manuscript Title: "*Taboos Related to Menstruation in Various Cultures*"

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Taboos Related To Menstruation In Various Cultures

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Abstract

Menstruation is the normal discharge of blood and tissue from the uterine lining through the vagina that occurs as part of a woman's monthly menstrual cycle. Menstruation occurs between menarche, a girl's first period, and menopause when the menstrual cycles end. Menstrual taboos have existed and still exist, in many or most cultures. Around the world and throughout history, misconceptions about menstruation have led to women's and girls' exclusion from all kinds of roles and settings. Superstitious beliefs about menstruation are common, and many have led to taboos that circumscribed menstruating women's behaviour. Among the beliefs described by Frazer (1951) are the following: Drops of menstrual blood upon the ground or in a river kill plants and animals; wells run dry if a menstruating woman draws water from them; men become ill if they are touched by or use any objects that have been touched by a menstruating woman; beer turns sour if a menstruating woman enters a brewery; and beer, wine, vinegar, milk, and jam go bad if touched by a menstruating woman. Awareness needs to be spread to stop these taboos from flourishing and hence menstruation can also be taken as an opportunity to take a break from regular responsibilities.

Keywords: Menstruation, taboos, superstitions, history, cultures, women, blood, beliefs, behaviour, awareness etc.

Introduction

Menstruation is the process in which the uterus sheds blood and tissue through the vagina. This is a natural and healthy process for girls and women of reproductive age. In Western communities, this is often called "the period." It typically lasts 2 to 5 days, but this varies by individual. When a female begins to menstruate, this is called menarche. Menstruation is part of the menstrual cycle, a cycle of biological changes that take place in a woman or girl's body that prepare her for reproduction. These changes are triggered by hormones, which are natural chemicals in the body. This cycle begins when a girl reaches puberty and continues until she reaches the end of her fertility also known as menopause, at which time menstrual cycles end. The menstrual cycle is roughly 28 days long, but it can be shorter or longer. It begins with menstruation (day 1). Menstruation is the shedding of the lining of the uterus and the remnants of the unfertilized egg. It continues with an increase in the hormone oestrogen, and the lining of the uterus becomes thick and spongy again (typically on days 6-8). An egg is released from one of the ovaries, called "ovulation" (around day 14), and then the egg moves through the fallopian tube towards the uterus (typically day 15-24). If the egg is not fertilized, it will not be implanted in the uterine wall but instead, fall apart, and hormone levels such as oestrogen and progesterone, will drop. This process is followed by the start of a new cycle.

Menstruation is often different from female to female. Even a single female may undergo different variations in her menstrual cycle during her lifetime. This is often healthy and normal. Sometimes menstruation prevents people from engaging in regular activities and medical attention is required. Lack of attention, lack of amenities, poverty, and little education about menstruation leads many women and girls to suffer for years without proper

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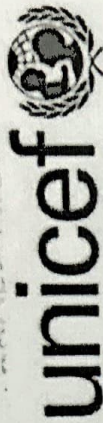
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