

Etiological Factors for Dysmenorrhea in Adolescent Girls

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Abstract

Adolescence is transitional journey from childhood to adult life along with pubertal development and sexual maturation. This may be considered as physical, psychological and emotional rebirth. Dysmenorrhea is the common menstrual disorder in adolescent girls. Primary dysmenorrhea is menstrual pain not associated with pelvic pathology. Conditions associated with secondary dysmenorrhea include: Genital tract infections, Endometriosis, Mullerian anomalies, ovarian neoplasm.

Keywords: Adolescence; Dysmenorrhea; Endometriosis; Mullerian Anomalies.

Gynaecologists are privileged to being associated with all the vital landmarks in woman's life. Besides assisting in her birth and the safe delivery of her children they are there to help, support and guide her through the wonderful period when she grows from childhood to womanhood. This may almost be considered a physical, psychological and emotional rebirth [1]. Adolescence is a transitional journey from childhood to adult life along with pubertal development and sexual maturation. In this period adolescent girl may experience many gynaecological problems. Dysmenorrhea is the most common gynaecological problems amongst adolescent girls [2]

Dysmenorrhea or painful menstruation is defined as a severe, painful, cramping sensation in the lower abdomen and is often accompanied by other symptoms, such as sweating, headaches, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea all occurring before or during menses. Primary dysmenorrhea refers to pain with no obvious pathological pelvic disease and almost always first occurs in adolescents after their ovulatory cycles become established. Secondary dysmenorrhea is caused by underlying pelvic pathology [3].

Primary dysmenorrhea is menstrual pain not associated with pelvic pathology and is more common in ovulatory cycles. The pathophysiology is related to decreased progesterone levels. This leads to lysosomal breakdown and increased synthesis of prostaglandin in endometrium and menstrual fluid. Dysmenorrhea has been significantly increased in association with family history [4].

Severity of dysmenorrhea symptoms positively correlates with early menarche and with increased duration and amount of menstrual flow. Cigarette smoking may increase duration of dysmenorrhea because of Nicotine induced vasoconstriction. Secondary dysmenorrhea refers to painful menstruation associated with pelvic abnormalities, which may be seen in 10-% of Adolescents with dysmenorrhea [5] Conditions associated with secondary Dysmenorrhoea include :-

- Genital Tract Infection [4]
- Endometriosis [5]
- Reproductive Tract Anomalies [5]
- Ovarian cyst, neoplasms [4]
- Adhesions [5]

Endometriosis is the most common cause of dysmenorrhea in adolescents. In adolescent age group, the possibility of mullerian anomalies must be considered [5].

Dysmenorrhea has a negative effects on the quality of the patients life. It is also responsible for a huge economic loss due to cost of medications, medical care and decreased productivity [6].

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Therefore, it is important to know etiological factors for dysmenorrhea which will enable the gynaecologist to evaluate accordingly and help to improve quality of life of adolescent girls.

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