



**AWARENESS AND ADHERENCE TO RAJASWALA REGIMEN
(AYURVEDIC MENSTRUAL CARE) WITH RESPECT TO PRESENT
DAY LIFESTYLE-A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Introduction:

With the changing scenario of modern living, women are slowly moving away and losing awareness of regimens like *Rajaswala Charya* (Menstrual Care), which are meant for preventive health care purposes and have been followed through several generations in our country. The diet and lifestyle pattern mentioned in this regimen is meant to avoid systemic or reproductive system related disorders and help to conceive healthy offspring. Considering current lifestyle, this study was conducted to assess awareness about *Rajaswala Charya* among college girls.

Methods and Material:

85 unmarried girls (age 18yrs - 24yrs) of commerce stream junior college in Pune, Maharashtra, filled a questionnaire consisting of all the codes of conduct, required to be followed during menstrual period.

Results:

According to the study, only 3-4% females were aware of any such regimen mentioned in Ayurveda supremely indicated for its health benefits. During menstruation 82.35% students were found eating junk food, 75.29% performed exercises like excessive walking, cycling, running, 72.9% were using cosmetics, 76.80% with mental Irritation / stress was observed in participants.

Conclusion: It is the need of the hour to restore the codes of conduct (mentioned in Ayurveda) to bring back the health harmony. Dietary and lifestyle changes could be used as an effective tool to prevent future reproductive issues.

Keywords: Awareness, Assessment, *Rajaswala Charya*, Reproductive Health, Ayurveda

INTRODUCTION

In today's era, a menstruating woman undergoes lot of physical and mental health problems, which were not so common, in earlier times. Unnecessary and exertive activities could lead to aggravation of *Vata dosha*, causing problems like dysmenorrhea, body-ache, and menorrhagia. Similarly, excessive consumption of hot and spicy food aggravates *Pitta dosha*, leading to menorrhagia, dark discolouration of vaginal discharge etc. Similarly, consumption of heavy to digest foods may lead to aggravation of *kapha dosha* and so, delayed menses, fibroids and so on. *Rajaswala Charya* [1, 2, 3] is a regimen to be followed during the bleeding days of menstrual cycle, which is approximate of 3 days which helps women to maintain health, avoid general or reproductive related disorders like PMS, PCOD, Infertility, so on [4] and help conceiving healthy offspring.

With this background, a study was conducted among college girls, with the objective to assess awareness about Menstrual Care among them and to observe

Food habit and lifestyle pattern during menstruation time.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study was an institute based observational study with a cross sectional design. Study was conducted in month of Jan-2019. The study area was junior college of commerce stream in Pimpri, Pune, Maharashtra, India. Institutional ethics committee approved this survey study, vide reference No. AY/343 (1) / 2018-19.

Unmarried female students aged 18 years to 24 years, studying in said college and who approached and gave written informed consent, were included. Students filled a questionnaire consisting of all the codes of conduct, [5, 6, 7] required to be followed during menses, related to diet, lifestyle and mental health pattern.

Inclusion Criteria – Girl students of age ranging from 18 to 24 years, irrespective of marital status.

Exclusion Criteria – Girls those unwilling for the study.

Study Design – Cross-sectional Survey study

Statistical Analysis – All analysis was conducted with SPSS software version 17.0 (SPSS Inc, Chicago, USA). Suitable statistics were used. For analysis of data Chi-Square test was used. Results were considered significant at conventional $p < 0.05$ level.

Operational definition: *Rajaswala Charya* or “Regimen for a female undergoing menstruation” is one such regimen to be followed during the bleeding days of menstrual cycle, which is approximately of 3 to 5 days. Specific diet, life-style and mental care during this period helps women to maintain health harmony.

Ethical Issues –

Study participants were assured about confidentiality of said data. Details regarding purpose, process and questionnaire of the study was informed to head of the institute and permission was obtained.

Prior consent was obtained from students of the college. Scientific session about code of conduct to be followed during menstruation was conducted, before filling the questionnaire of the study. Efforts were put to solve the queries raised by students.

Discussion –

The questionnaire consisted of complete menstrual regimen instructed by *Acharyas* in

Ayurveda. The regimen includes Lifestyle as well as Dietary pattern.

Ayurveda suggests that diet during menses should be very light to digest, and should not be excessively hot, spicy, sour or salty in nature (Similar to fast food these days like Vada-Pav, Pani-Puri etc.)

- Regarding food habits 77.64% preferred eating food at restaurant on a regular basis. Which is not healthy & nutritious and cause imbalance of *doshas* in the body (**Table 1**).
- Among these junk food (Pungent, Spice and salty food) eaters, the highest number were found to be eating Pani-puri with 64.7% (**Table 2**). *Tikshna*, *Ushna* (hot), *Katu* (spicy), *Amla* (sour), *Lavan* (salty), *Atisnigdha* (too oily), *Atiguru* (heavy to digest), *Vidahi* (spicy), *Vishthambhi* foods (constipation causing food) should be avoided during menstruation. [8] Eating fast food leads to *Agni-mandya* (lowers digestive power), it causes vitiation of *kapha* and *Vata dosha* in the body. This further leads to vitiation of *Rasa dhatu* (First *dhatu* formed from food) and its *upadhatu*, *aartav* (Ovum) and so on. This is understood by disturbances in menstrual cycle in terms of irregularities, bloating or dysmenorrhea during menses and may

ultimately cause serious hazards in future.

- Amongst the participants, 75.29% performed exercises while their menstrual flow was still on (**Table 3**). Ayurveda suggests various way to minimize/minimal physical activity and maximum amount of rest during menses helps to cope up with the changes taking place in the body without much difficulty. Frequent rigorous exercise aggravates *Vata Dosha*, which may cause problems like dysmenorrhea body ache, Menorrhagia [9]. Study shows that frequent rigorous exercise like recreational skiers leads to Anterior cruciate ligament tear. ACL tear risk in skiing in women is not constant over the menstrual cycle, being 2.4-fold more frequent in pre-ovulatory than post-ovulatory phase. Oral contraception seems not to exert any protective effect [10].
- Physical exercise combined with low body fat puts stress on your body and this stress tells your brain to stop producing reproductive hormones. Since you cannot nourish a baby under extreme stress, your body temporarily shuts down the production of fertility hormones [11].
- Most of participants were sleeping over bed instead of Mat, contradictory

to the codes of conduct of the regimen [12]. Large number of students were using cosmetics (72.9%) during menses. Ayurveda dismisses use of cosmetics, *anjana* (kajal) or cutting of nails during menstrual period as a preventive regimen (**Table 4**). It suggests that all these acts are ‘*Vrushya*’ (aphrodisiac) in nature and so should not be followed during this period as a measure to avoid indulgence in physical relationship or mental distraction.

- 85.88% of subjects observed with mental irritation / mental stress (**Table 5**). These may be due to improper shedding of endometrium and *Dosha* imbalance in the body. Improper physical care often affects mind as they are closely related.
- According to the study, only 3% females were aware of any such (*rajaswala*) regimen mentioned in Ayurveda (**Table 6**). Being felt that it was an orthodox way of looking at it, whereas in olden days, isolation for a menstruating woman was carried out, not because of any religious or cultural belief but as a part of personal hygiene and as an assurance of complete rest for females during that period. But the idea of giving importance to health first is fast fading with time, what with

the rise of modern era is giving importance to the concept of quick fixes.

RESULTS

A. Diet pattern observed amongst study population

Table 1: Percentage prevalence of subjects about food patterns:

Do'S	No of Females Following It	Percentage	Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Home-made	15	17.64	19.8392	0.00005	Sig
Restaurant or Fast food	66	77.64			
Both	4	4.7			

Table 2: Percentage prevalence of subjects about consumption of fast-food during menses

No	Type of fast food	No of Females Consuming It	Percentage	Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
1	Pizza	16	18.82	29.939	0.00162	Sig
2	Burger	19	22.35			
3	Noodles	46	54.11			
4	Chinese	23	27.05			
5	Pani-Puri	55	64.7			
6	Vada Pav	47	55.29			
7	Samosa	26	30.58			
8	Pav-Bhaji	24	28.23			
9	Dhokla	12	14.11			
10	Idli-Dosa	35	41.17			
11	Bakery	21	24.7			
12	Papad-Pickle	12	14.11			

B. Lifestyle during Menses

Table 3: Percentage prevalence of subjects about various physical activities performed during menses

No	Don'ts	No of Females Following The Don'ts	Percentage	Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
1	Listening to music	48	56.46	33.158	0.00026	Sig
2	Talking loudly and continuously	32	37.64			
3	Laughing loudly	50	58.82			
4	Excessive walking	55	64.7			
5	Running	16	18.82			
6	Cycling	17	20			
7	Exercise	64	75.29			
8	Playing	27	31.76			
9	Weight lifting	20	23.52			
10	Mountain climbing	2	2.35			
11	Sleeping during the day	56	65.88			

Table 4: Percentage prevalence of subjects about personal ablution and beautification

No	Don'ts	No of Females Following The Don'ts	Percentage	Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
1	Sleeping on bed	65	76.47	21.838	0.00056	Sig
2	Oil Massage	14	16.47			
3	Use of Cosmetics	62	72.9			
4	Application of Kajal	53	62.35			
5	Cutting of nails	41	48.23			
6	Head bath	19	32.75			

Table 5: Percentage prevalence of subjects about psychological behaviour

3. Psychological Behaviour						
1. Irritation				Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Yes	73	85.88%	21.1853	0.0000251	Sig	
No	10	11.76%				
Sometimes	2	2.35%				
2. Feel To Beat Someone				Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Yes	35	41.17%	5.55802	0.062	NS	
No	48	56.47%				
Sometimes	2	2.35%				
3. Romantic Behaviour				Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Yes	14	16.47%	13.9675	0.000186	Sig	
No	71	83.52%				
4. Feel To Cry				Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Yes	37	43.52	5.47599	0.065	NS	
No	46	54.11				
Sometimes	2	2.35				
5. Sound Sleep				Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Yes	35	41.17	4.94938	0.026	Sig	
No	50	58.82				

Table 6: Percentage prevalence of subjects about awareness of menstrual regimen

Awareness of such a regimen as mentioned above?	Affirmative	Negative	Chi-Square Value	P-Value	Result
Number of students (Percentage)	3 (2.55%)	82 (97.45%)	22.0116538	0.0000027	Sig

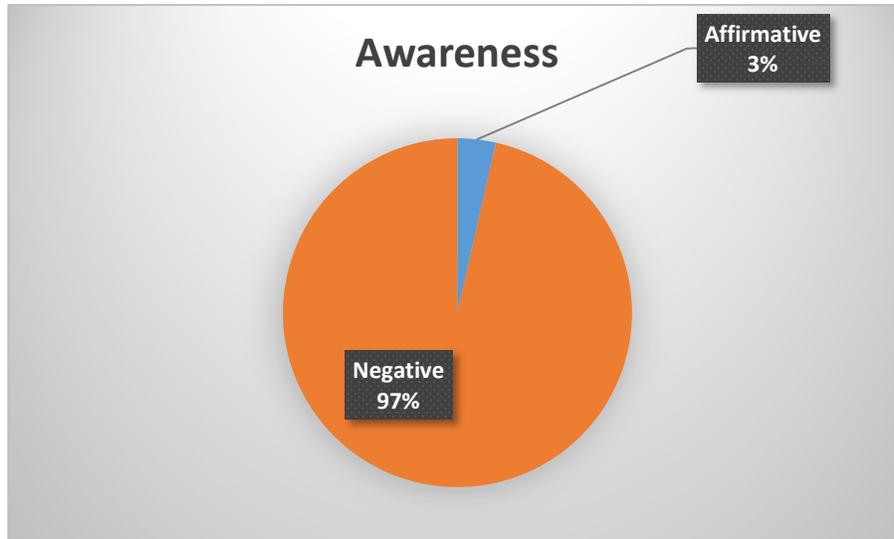


Figure 1: Percentage prevalence of subjects about awareness of menstrual regimen

CONCLUSION

Results of this study shows that awareness level among junior college female students about menstrual regimen to be followed was unsatisfactory. To prevent future reproductive health issues menstrual health promotion programmes are needed to be conducted frequently at large scale so as to maintain health harmony.

People now a days rely upon quick fixes and do not bother about preventive care, therefore awareness amongst them should be heightened. Adherence to *Rajaswala Charya* can generate healthy mother and child.

Healthy menstrual practices will provide the benefits of higher chances of healthy progeny and ultimately healthy society.

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