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Living Experience and Self-Care Strategies in Young College Going Females with Dysmenorrhea: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

The prevalence of dysmenorrhea is reported to be 70.2% in India, so it is crucial to understand the experience of females living with dysmenorrhea and the role of physiotherapy in improving the condition. This study aims to explore the experience of young females with dysmenorrhea, its impact on academics, their attitude toward society, and self-care strategies. 10 young dysmenorrheic participants were selected through the physical survey of the WALLID score scale. An interview guide with 12 open-ended questions was formulated after a thorough review of the literature which was later validated by a group of multidisciplinary experts. Participants were audio-video interviewed using the interview guide, then the interviews were transcribed verbatim and entered into QDA miner lite software for qualitative analysis. Codes and themes were identified, and code trees and word clouds were obtained. 10 principal themes and 38 codes were identified: onset of pain, symptoms and its nature, hampering academics, hindrance in the activity of daily living, relation with friends and family, the attitude of society and taboo, self-care strategies, barriers in social integration, approaches for pain management, obstacles and suggestions. Study findings uncovers that most young females experience absenteeism in academics as they cannot cope up with pain and the university hygiene which also hampers their activities of daily living. Majority of them experience negative attitude of the society towards their problem and also college facilities. Most females prefer home remedies over drugs and are unaware of the benefits of physiotherapy in dysmenorrhea. They also anticipate some changes to ease their management in college areas as in washroom's hygiene and cleanliness. Results show that most of the participants prefer non-pharmaceutical approaches and prefer to stay indoors in order to manage their pain which raises the lack of awareness of physiotherapy management.

Keywords: *Dysmenorrhea, Coping strategies, Qualitative research.*