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From first to last: what women know or want to know about menstruation

ABSTRACT

Background

Menstruations accompany a woman for a great part of her life, during the whole fertile age. The understanding of this event, considered as a physiologic phenomenon of the reproductive life of a woman, is under the area of expertise of midwives.

Objectives

Verifying women's concerns and needs about menstruations and men's point of view about such a female topic.

Researching, in the scientific evidence, what a midwife should know about this topic, to promote an appropriate counselling.

Methods

A survey was carried out: a narrative interview with 25 women, between 15 and 83 years old, and a questionnaire sent by e-mail to 10 men, between 19 and 73 years old.

A literature research was performed on gynecological treaties, national and international guidelines, anthropological essays, popular literature and the magazine "D&D"; on the PubMed database and on the web.

Results

Data from the survey suggest that women strongly pay attention on the changes in their body, while most of them (70 %) don't know exactly the physiology of the phenomenon.

Their feeling towards menstruation is ambiguous: it is extremely bad for those who suffer from premenstrual and menstrual disorders, but even these women would not give up it if they had the opportunity.

The literature research covered the following topics:

the physiology of the ovarian and menstrual cycle and its disorders, the social and cultural aspects, menarche and menopause, menstruation in the reproductive age (the effects of contraception, pregnancy and breastfeeding), premenstrual syndrome and dysmenorrhea, menstruation and daily life.

Conclusions

The positive aspects of menstruation arise when you bring women to think about it, but the public scene sees it described in almost exclusively negative terms .

Creating some space for discussing this issue, encouraging women to actively take care of their health, can help the development of a positive culture about menstruation.