

PRACTICES OF PERSONAL HYGIENE AMONG HOSTEL WOMEN IN CHANDIGARH

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Abstract

Personal hygiene as the name depicts is related to hygiene of oneself. Personal hygiene is the first step towards the healthy life. Having a good personal hygiene helps to prevent the infection of diseases, illness and bad odours. It is well said that, "A healthy mind lives in a healthy body." To keep our body healthy, we should focus on our personal hygiene. Personal hygiene is the practice which we adopt at home and individual level. Everybody have their own standard habits that they have learned to be sanitary. In this paper, women's personal hygiene is the main concerned area or in other words how much they are aware about their personal cleanliness? Women's contribution is endless to society - be it at home or outside. It simply means women are at risk level for their own personal hygiene and also of others around. The present study attempts to find out the practice of personal hygiene among women because they are careless about their personal hygiene. The study was focused on the hostel women of Panjab University, Chandigarh for which random sample of fifty (50) women was taken. From the result it has been revealed that women are highly aware regarding their personal hygiene. But the large number, due to inadequate knowledge, was found to follow certain unhygienic practices resulting in poor menstruation hygiene. The paper lays emphasis on the importance of good personal hygiene and the practices among women to keep their personal hygiene. Suggestions of the study are also stated at the end.

Keywords: Personal Hygiene, Women, Sanitary, Awareness.

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Introduction

The word “Hygiene” is derived from Hygeia which implies the Goddess of health in Greek mythology (<http://wordinfo.info/unit/2839/s:aper cent20sourceper cent20ofper cent20health>). She was the guardian of physical and mental health. Hygiene is the science of preservation of wellbeing. It is the practice to prevent ourselves from spreading the diseases and it is the science of health which embraces all factors which contribute to healthy lifestyle. The term personal hygiene includes all those activities, which influence our health and well being of the individual. Hygiene is often mentioned in relation to health; it includes oral hygiene, food hygiene and personal hygiene. Good hygiene practices help us to remain healthy. Making herself healthy is very important for women. Personal hygiene is the vital part of our daily routine life. But, we are ignoring it without thinking its pros and cons on our health. Women are the backbone of the house and hygiene on their personal part is essential. They do a lot of activities in and outside the house. All these activities of women life emphasize on the importance of feminine hygiene. Maintaining appropriate feminine hygiene for intimate area is one of the important factors because it plays vital role in every aspect of female reproductive health, sexual health and quality of life. According to WHO report on women and health,2009 women’s health during the reproductive or fertile years between the ages of 15 and 49 years (Women and health,2016) is relevant not only to women themselves, but also has an impact on the health and development of the next generation. In relation to this, Women have some special areas to consider for personal hygiene. Especially the girls, who have reproductive age and menstrual cycle, require more sanitization (<http://www.livestrong.com/article/89942-personal-hygiene-women/>). Lack of proper personal hygiene is like giving the invitation of several diseases. There is no alternative of good personal hygiene practice for leading a healthy life.

Review of literature

Ejik, A.M.V. et al. (2016) examined the ‘Menstrual hygiene management among adolescent girls in India: a systematic review and meta-analysis.’ They scrutinised that girls were utterly unaware from the menarche. They were under stress, anxiety, depression, wrath during this period. Although puberty education is important all over the world yet in some area parents and teacher felt hesitating to discuss about this issue. So, awareness programme is needed to strengthen life

skills education and improving the wash facilities and public health practices among adolescent girls.

Imtiaz, K.S. et al. (2014) had done the research on ‘Practice of Personal Hygiene among Rural women of a Selected Community in Bangladesh’ and concluded that women of Garibpur and Tangurpur of Chougasa Upazilla of Jessore district were conscious about washing after defecation and used soap mostly. But, not have too much awareness of washing hand during eating snacks and other dry foods. The study emphasised that there is no substitute of good personal hygiene practice for leading a healthy life. Therefore, regular health education programmes should be arranged to motivate the women regarding practices of good personal hygiene.

Pore, S.M. & Randive, S.D. (2014) explored the study on environmental sanitation and personal hygiene among the slum area in Solapur city, Maharashtra. They studied that people of Solapur area were not much educated and owing to low level of income and standard of living, they have lack of awareness about environmental sanitation and its importance. It gave the injuries impact on their health. They have inadequate provisions of unsafe water, unhygienic and inadequate sanitation practice, drainage and garbage collection by which they suffer from allergies, and diseases. So, condition should be improved by ground level of administration and for this Municipal Corporation should aware the people about sanitation and hygiene. It should take some vital steps for improving their health, standard of living, and provision of appropriate facility (water supply, solid waste and liquid waste management).

Vismita, P. et al. (2014) analyzed the Personal Hygiene Habits among School-Going Children in Rural Areas of Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. They observed that rural school going children have a good sense of personal hygiene. They take care of their sanitation frequently and also spread consciousness for personal hygiene among others in their neighbourhood.

Sarkar, M. (2013) conducted the study on Personal hygiene among primary school children living in a slum of Kolkata, India. He examined that female students have more knowledge compare to male students towards the maintenance of personal hygiene. A wide gap and

misconception was found between the practice and knowledge of personal hygiene among the primary school children living in the slum area. Also, significant relationship was found between the practice and knowledge of personal hygiene among the primary school children living in the slum area.

Thakre, S.B. et al. (2011) expounded about ‘Menstrual Hygiene: Knowledge and Practice among Adolescent School Girls of Saoner, Nagpur District’ and found that knowledge of menstruation hygiene among school going girls was not optimal at both urban and rural level. So, it is necessary to design a mechanism for the accessing the healthy menstrual practice.

Vivas, A. et al. (2010) evaluated the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of hygiene among rural school children in Ethiopia. The study targets two key issues (education and resources) that must be addressed when creating health and hygiene promotion programs. Only 52per cent of the students have the knowledge of healthy hygiene practice. So, for the rest of the group, proper awareness programme should be arrange by the community or through education it can be improved. Secondly, proper resources should be arranged for hygiene practice. Well -planned and well -situated hand washing amenities and toilets that include adequate amounts of soap and water, are essential in promoting hygiene. If these two interventions i.e. education and resources for healthy hygiene will be arranged then the problem of unhygienic can be tackled to a great extent.

Deb, S. et al. (2010) undertook the relationship study of personal hygiene with nutrition and morbidity profile: A study among primary school children in South Kolkata. For this, they conducted the descriptive, observational, cross- sectional study in a primary school situated in the largest slum of Kolkata. They analyzed that girls have more hygiene habits compare to boy and more than 70per cent of children in both sexes are suffering from morbidities like pallor, followed by worm infestations.

Many studies have been done on women personal hygiene practice. But, all of them discussed the menstruation period hygiene. Personal hygiene is necessary for the entire body areas. In the light of above gap, this research has been taken which comprise the hygiene practice of all areas.

Objectives

1. To study the importance of personal hygiene.
2. To study about primary components of personal hygiene.
3. To assess the knowledge and the practices of personal hygiene among hostel women in Chandigarh.

Importance of Personal Hygiene for Women

Knowledge and practices of personal hygiene is very important for healthy life. Women's hygiene is so important for many reasons (Skelton, P. (n.d.)):

- Women are always engrossed in household activities like cooking the food, cleansing of the house and caring for children and other family members. It means that women health is on immense menace and sustaining personal hygiene is very essential for her.
- Personal hygiene is important from health point of view. Keeping yourself clean is essential not only for you but for the people around you. It depends on us, how much attention we pay towards our cleanliness to keep ourselves free from disease, such as skin diseases, respiratory diseases or gastro intestinal diseases.
- Personal hygiene is also imperative at social level. It is vital especially during sweating, menstruation (periods) and vaginal discharge to prevent body odour and to be healthy. It is especially important at the places where proper etiquettes are required like work, school or in social activities.

Components

Personal hygiene have some primary components as Body or skin hygiene, hand, foot, armpit, genetic part, hair, ear, nails, face, oral and clothes which need daily care and ignorance towards it can cause several body diseases.

| Components | Healthy habits to be followed | Diseases |
|----------------------|---|----------|
| Skin or Body Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean yourself daily from the germs of sweating. • Avoid sharing soap, towel, clothes etc. <p>(http://www.faqs.org/health/Healthy-</p> | |

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| | Living-V1/Personal-Care-and-Hygiene-Body-basics.html) | Boils, warts, scabies, parasites, fungus between the toes etc. (Chalke, H.D.,1963) |
| Hand Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your hands before and after eating • Wash your hands after touching or playing with pets and other animals • Wash your hands after sneezing and coughing, • Wash your hands after going to the bathroom • Wash your hands after touching the garbage • Wash your hands before and after treating a cut or wound. (Hygiene and Environmental Health Module) | |
| Face Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash your face after coming from outside or before going to bed. • Rinse the eyes with the gentle flow of water to dislodge the foreign objects. • Never share your face towel with others. • Remove the makeup before going to bed. | |
| Clothes Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear daily tidy inner and outer clothes. • Wet clothes should be dry in sunlight. • Boiling water or anti bacteria liquids can be used to destroy clothes infestation. | |
| Foot Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wear proper sized foot wear • Daily wash and clean with the soft clean towel. | |
| Armpit Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular washing of the armpit during shower also reduce the body smell. • Avoid the use of razor in underarms. | |

| | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your armpit clean and dry all the time. | |
| Oral Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rinse the mouth after each meal. • Brush your teeth with a fluoride containing toothpaste twice a day – before breakfast and before you go to bed. • During the day, fill your mouth with water and whoosh it around to get rid of anything sticking to your teeth. | Bad breath, gum diseases, sores, dental problems (Hygiene and Environmental Health Module) |
| Hair Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean and comb regularly. Never share the comb with others. • Wash your hair at least twice in a week. • Massage your scalp well. This will remove dead skin cells, excess oil and dirt. • Use a wide toothed comb for wet hair because it is easier to pull through. • Dry the hair and the head with a clean towel. Never share a towel with someone else. • Consult the dermatologist in case of heavy hair fall. | Dandruff, hair loss, weak and shedding hair, sebum loss |
| Ear Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily washing of the outer layer of the ears. • Don't use hairpins, safety pins or blunt edged things for cleansing • Do not go beyond with your little finger into your ear. • Consult the doctor immediately, if you feel wax has amassed or any hearing problem. | Hearing loss, swimmer's ear, fungi, boils (www.myvmc.com/lifestyle/how-facial-hygiene-can-affect-eyes) |
| Nails Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By keeping the nails short and trim • Evade biting and chewing the nails • Scrub the underside of the nails | Paronychia, Fungal infection etc. |

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--|
| | with soap and water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toenails and fingernails should be kept clean, neatly trimmed, and smooth to prevent injury to skin. | |
| Genital Hygiene | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change tampons or any other sanitary products after every 6 hours during menstruation. Regular wash your vagina with pH balance wash. Cover the toilet seat with toilet paper to save yourselves from bacteria. Wipe the outer area of genital area after every urine or bowel movement. Change undergarments daily as well as when it is soiled or wet. Avoid wearing the tight underwear, instead wear cotton undergarments. <p>(https://www.everteen.co.in/feminine-hygiene-you-are-doing-it-wrong/)</p> | Problem of abnormal vagina, like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bad odour itching or irritation strange colour, such as green, gray, or yellow Rashes Soreness Uterus cancer (Chalke, H.D., 1963) |

Delimitations

The delimitations of the study were

- Group of women between the age group 18-30 years were selected.
- Hostel women were selected from five hostels of Panjab University, Chandigarh.

Methodology

Sample – Sample of fifty (50) women were taken between the age group of 18-30 years who were living in the hostels at Panjab University, Chandigarh. There are total nine (9) hostels in Panjab University, Chandigarh, from which five (5) hostels were selected randomly and from each hostel ten (10) women were selected through Simple randomise technique.

Tool and technique: - For the collection of data, self made questionnaire was used by the researcher. The researcher herself collected the data from the women.

Data collection: - Data was collected from the hostel women. Researcher firstly established a rapport with them and questionnaire was filled by the respondents in front of the researcher.

Results

On the basis of data collection, following results of the study was computed.

Table - 1

The basic information about the sample is written below:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Age(years) | 18-22 | 23-26 | 27-30 |
| | 31 (62per cent) | 12 (24per cent) | 7(14per cent) |
| Qualification (pursuing) | Graduation | Post-graduation | Ph.D. |
| | 20 (40per cent) | 22 (44per cent) | 8 (16per cent) |

Table - 1 highlight the basic information about the sample. Out of fifty (50) students, three age groups of the students were considered i.e. 18-22, 23-26 and 27-30 years.

Table – 2

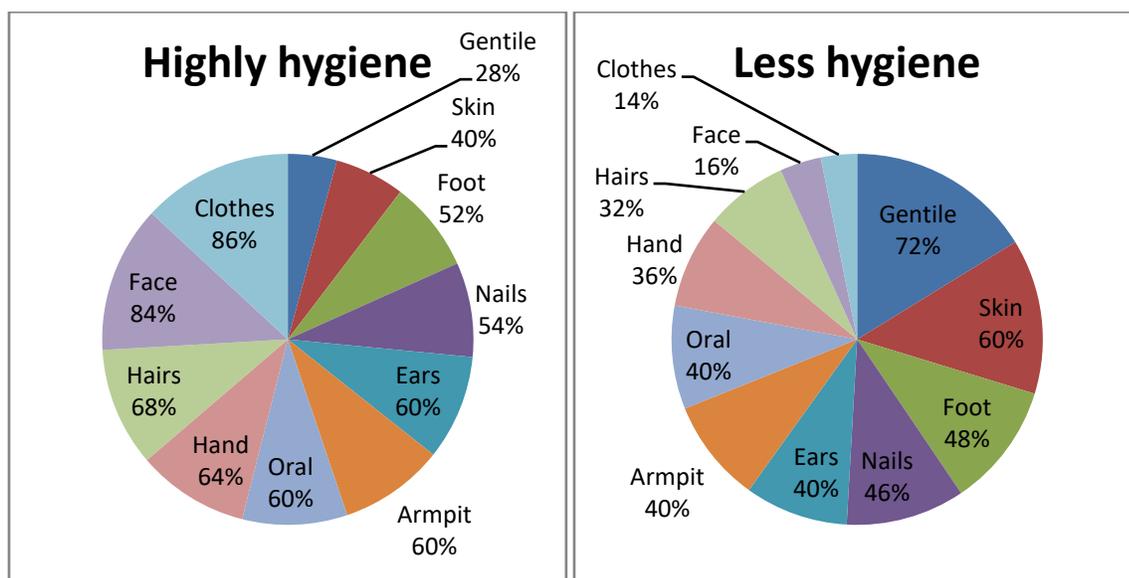
Mean score of the sample

| Total no. of the sample | Mean score | No. of women below mean score | No. of women above mean score |
|-------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 50 | 84.58 | 23 | 27 |

The table – 2 revealed that the mean scores of fifty (50) women were 84.58. Twenty seven (27) women scored above the mean average whereas Twenty three (23) women scored less than the mean.

Graph-1

Distribution of women in highly and less hygienic category



Pie chart distribution in Graph-1 gave the outline of the highly and less hygiene percentage level of the women towards their body component.

Discussion

Table- 1 depicted that maximum sample i.e. 31 (62per cent) lies in between the 18-22 years of age group. It means that maximum women were in teenage stage. Further, table show the basic educational qualifications of the women, at which level of education they were studying. 40per cent of the women were studying graduation in various streams, 44per cent studying post graduation and 16per cent of the sample women were research scholars in different departments. With the help of table – 2 it is evident that women were highly aware about their personal hygiene.

The graph- 1 showed the standard of personal hygiene among women. Survey report revealed that 86per cent of women were highly aware about having hygiene towards their clothes and 84per cent Women were aware for their face hygiene. They were conscious for their clothes and face sensitization. They were habitual for changing their inner clothes daily and having a good practice to wash their face and cloth to maintain a self sensitization. 68per cent of the women were conscious for their hair hygiene. 64per cent women pay attention towards their hands hygiene. 60per cent women conceded their oral, armpit and ears hygiene on regular basis. 54per cent of sample strength having nails hygiene practice and 52per cent have the habit of maintaining their foot hygiene. But, a great extent of the sample was less aware about their body and skin hygiene and this practice become more less for carrying towards their gentile area hygiene.

The study brought the result that women have lack knowledge of practise for their gentile area hygiene. They were using soaps for cleaning their vagina which can be very harmful for them. For the sanitisation of vagina pH (potential of hydrogen) balance products should be used. A healthy pH encourages the growth of good bacteria and discourages harmful bacteria (Fullformdirectory.in/pH-full-form.html). While discussing the problem of sanitization with present sample, the major problem which came forward was the lack of knowledge and resources available to them.

Suggestions

For disseminating the awareness towards personal hygiene the collaborate efforts of the society and individual is required.

- Special awareness programme should be promoted at school, college and university level.
- Parents should also be opened towards the issue of gentile or any other hygiene practises with their daughters and teach them the proper ways to sanitize.
- Government wings that are dealing with health department should also make arrangements for the awareness and provide the initial facilities to the women if they are not able afford it.
- Media should also promote more services for healthy hygienic practices.

Conclusion

A variety of factors are affecting our personal hygiene. The poor hygiene practice can become the cause of several skin diseases. To prevent hazardous diseases, knowledge of good hygiene is required. At the reproductive stage if proper cleanliness habits are not adopted by the women, it can become a major cause of diseases for the next generation. Basically, personal hygiene is the practice that we employ to make ourselves germs free and minimise the spread of diseases. There is no other alternative of good personal hygiene for leading prosper and healthy life. So, women should be motivated for practice for personal hygiene with the help of various kind health awareness programmes and education.

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