Designing menstrual hygiene intervention in Bangladesh focusing on faith-based approach


icddr,b
Bangladesh
Background

• Faith-based approach:
  - Affiliated with, supported by, or based on a religion or religious group

• Why important:

• People have some type of religious affiliation

• High rate of religious beliefs in Bangladesh is a channel for communication

• Deliver culturally appropriate messages through trusted source
Rationale

- Most faith-based programs focused on primary prevention, general health maintenance, or cardiovascular health
- Successful at reductions in cholesterol and blood pressure levels, weight, and disease symptoms
- Most delivered through churches in African American communities
- Little or no programs focusing on WASH and from Islamic faith-based perspectives
Objectives

• To assess the current knowledge, facilities and practices regarding menstrual hygiene management prior to the intervention

• Collecting relevant data to inform an intervention relevant for the target communities

• Develop and deliver a faith-based MHM intervention in eight Bangladeshi village
Methodology

- Baseline study for a cluster randomized trial
- Eight clusters from 3 districts of Bangladesh
- Area neighboring mosque or Islamic schools = cluster
- Selected 24 households from each cluster
- Conducted baseline survey during April 2017
- Selected 192 adult women from households
  - Verbally administered questionnaire survey
  - Spot checks of facilities
Methodology
Findings

• Mean age of respondents 32 years
• Average household income 258 AUD/month
• Education:
  - 16% had no formal education
  - 46% completed education up to grade five
  - 32% completed grade six to ten
• 92% were homemakers
Findings

• Knowledge on menarche:
  - 27% understood what changes occur during puberty
  - 42% knew about menstruation before menarche
  - 57% were scared during their first menstruation

• Absorbent material used during menstruation:
  - 64% used old cloth/rag
  - 30% used disposable pad

• Presence of Handwashing Station with soap at 47% households
Findings

• Cleaning absorbent:
  - Among cloth user, 67% washed with soap
  - 46% dried cloth under sunlight

• Disposing absorbent:
  - 25% disposed with household garbage
  - 7% disposed in the toilet pan

• Forbidden activities:
  - 85% were forbidden religious actives
  - 35% were forbidden other than religious activities
Conclusion

• Intervention should focus:
  - knowledge about puberty and menstrual hygiene
  - absorbent material disposal
  - sanitary cloth washing and drying methods
  - increased access to a handwashing places with soap
Conclusion

- Intervention could be aligned with regular religious teaching in the mosques
- Could be aligned with regular class in Islamic schools
- Adolescent girls’ could form peer group in schools
Recommendation

• Delivering interventions on menstrual hygiene through mosques and Islamic schools could be an effective method

• Religious leaders can clarify that there are no restrictions during menstruation according to religious texts
Team members
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