2nd International Conference on

Reproductive Health December 01-02, 2016 San Antonio, USA

Safeness of using reusable pads in vulnerable adolescent girls: Microbiological study findings

Bumanzi Alice¹, Adolescents Sexual¹ and Emil Ivan Mwikarago² ¹Health Development and Performance, Rwanda ²National Reference Laboratory, Rwanda

Statement of the Problem: Menstruation is a natural process in every woman lifetime; many researchers have revealed challenges and obstacles that surround this period. Among others, the lack of financial means to afford adequate hygienic requirements directly reflects the economic aspect of the challenges faced by young girls during the menstruation especially in developing countries. It obviously has great implications on girls' development including school attendance and performance; consequently increasing their vulnerability in terms of sexual and reproductive health development. Different initiatives have been implemented to improve the quality of life during such a natural, yet critical period that each adolescent girl goes through like use of reusable materials by girls and women with poor menstruation management capacities. However, assessing the safeness of the reusable pads has not been previously studied. The purpose of this study is to assess the acceptability of reusable pads and the risk of infection while using re-washable pads.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Four months after the distribution of reusable pads among adolescent girls aged 10-19 years from poor families; focus group discussions were utilized to collect feedback from users on acceptability and 40 used pads were collected and tested for potential hydrogen (PH) and systematic culture.

Results: The microbiological analysis evaluated the change in PH and the presence of pathogens to appraise the risk of infection. A predominance of environmental pathogens in 58% of the sampled pads, 39% of infections from bacteria of the Enterobacteriaceae family and 3% were of Pseudomonas aeruginosa; 80% of users of reusable pads experienced difficulties in regard to appropriate washing measures with 35% in terms of finding clean water and 50% lack of soap and bucket; 15% feared to dry the pads under the sun and 40% acknowledged having faced delay in drying of washed pads and; participants reported the increased sensation of comfort, the zero risk of falling and staining clothes when using I-care pads as positive change in regards to menstruation management which attributed to the reusable pads the merit of menstruation management among adolescents.

Results & Conclusion: The presence of unidentified environmental pathogens, both in used and no used reusable pads had the risk of the pads' infestation to the exposure of the sample during transportation and manipulation process. We should also mention that there was no STI screening or testing conducted prior to the distribution of I-care pads, thereafter the preexisting bacterial infections could not be excluded as the source of the apparent infections. As per the charts, plotting the PH against the age, location and district of provenance of different sampled individuals, there was no apparent correlation against all mentioned variable. Hence, the change in PH was attributed to individual exposure depending on the behavior and environment of each of the sampled individuals. The analysis of the washing and drying processes of utilized pads are key to excluding any risk of infection when using reusable pads. Recommendations are the initiative of utilizing reusable pads should be accompanied with menstruation management and hygiene information and facilitations such as soap and buckets. At the other hand, the same analysis has to be conducted after a year of use to certify the time life of a reusable pad.

bumanzi.alice@hdp-rw.org