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**Knowledge and attitudes regarding dysmenorrhoea
among adolescent girls in an urban school**

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Dysmenorrhoea or painful menstruation is a very common complaint among women of reproductive age which affects with mental, social and physical activities of adolescents. Attitudes may affect their healthcare seeking behaviour. A descriptive study was conducted among 200 adolescent girls in Grade 12 classes (all students attending Commerce, Arts, Combined Mathematics and Bio Science classes) in a school in Nugegoda educational division in Colombo district to assess the knowledge and attitudes regarding dysmenorrhoea. The students were given a self administered questionnaire following ethical clearance and parental consent. The results indicated that 84% of the study population had dysmenorrhoea. A similar percentage had physical discomfort. When considering the localization of pain, most of students' (85%) pain was localized in the abdomen. Resting was the main pain relieving method (63%). Paracetamol was the drug of choice for pain relief (87%). Ayurvedic pain killers like Siddalepa was used by 4% and coriander water was used by 6% of the students. 85% of students used it mainly as a preventive remedy before the onset of menstrual pain as a preventive remedy. There was a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) association between pain and poor mental health status (increased anger, less concentration, impaired decision making) (66%) of the adolescents, but there was no significant association between the pain and poor physical health status ($p=0.887$) and poor social health status ($p=0.395$) of the girls. Our findings indicate that 44% of students are absent from school at least one day a month due to the menstrual pain. There was no significant association between the pain and school absenteeism ($p= 0.805$). Almost all students (93%) of this study have stated that they seek answers for their menstrual problems from their mothers and 84% of students said that pain was a natural thing for them. Only a small proportion (6%) of adolescents stated that pain is a symptom of disease in the reproductive tract. Bathing is perceived to be affecting pain as reported by 95% of the students. In conclusion, dysmenorrhoea was common among adolescent girls in an urban school and was associated with their mental status. Most of the students did not seek medical advice for dysmenorrhoea. As health care providers, arranging health education sessions is therefore important to raise their awareness.