

Lived-in Experience of Using Menstrual Cups among Nursing Students: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Aims and background: Menstrual hygiene is a critical aspect of women's health, and exploring the lived experience of menstrual cup usage, among nursing students, can light an insight into valuable output to educate and practice in adolescent groups. This qualitative study aims to explore the lived-in experiences, challenges, and implications of using menstrual cups among nursing students.

Materials and methods: A qualitative approach with a phenomenology approach involving in-depth interviews with nursing students aged 18–23 from diverse backgrounds. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants from those who used menstrual cups for at least one menstrual cycle. A thematic content-based analysis with a framework was done to identify recurring patterns, themes, and insights related to the participants' lived experiences.

Results: The study revealed the multifaceted experiences of 12 nursing students using menstrual cups. Themes encompassed aspects of comfort, acceptability, challenges, and recommendations. Most of the participants were in favor of using the menstrual cup, and there were comments of difficulty in sterilizing the cup after usage. The background of the student played a significant role in shaping the attitude and experience of using the menstrual cup.

Conclusions: This qualitative study provides an explored understanding of the lived-in experiences of nursing students using menstrual cups. The positive and negative experiences of initial and subsequent usage of menstrual cups are picturized in this study.

Clinical significance: Nursing students are the medium of awareness to the public, and with the changing trends in menstrual practices. They can be the best reference to understand the experience in the use of menstrual cups. Further research areas suggested to explore in this study are the prevalence and long-term impact of menstrual cup usage among nursing students, including opinions from males.

Keywords: Menstrual cup, Menstruation, Menstrual hygiene, Women's health.

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INTRODUCTION

The menstrual cup is a type of female reusable, hygienic product. It is small in size and funnel-shaped, made of rubber or silicon. This is inserted into the vagina to collect blood during menstruation.¹

Cups can hold more blood than napkins, an alternative to tampons. It can be worn for up to 12 hours. It is available in varied sizes according to criteria like age, length of the cervix, flow, and strength of pelvic floor muscles. The main advantages of using menstrual cups are that they are affordable, safer than tampons, hold more blood, and are better for the environment. The most important thing is that it is a low-cost approach. Pay a one-time price for the cup, which is reusable for 5–10 years. This method is convenient for adolescents and makes them comfortable during their activities. This small cup can be a good option for teenagers and women under 25. This cup can hold 23 mL of fluid, sufficient for a few hours or even in heavy flow day and night.

The menstrual cup acts as a catch basin for flow and seals the upper vagina. It is used as a safe and comfortable method. It helps women to do physical activities during the time of menstruation. It is made of rubber or silicon material, limiting the growth of bacteria. It could be cleansed with a cleansing solution or sterilized. It is anatomically designed to engage and maintain position. It is flexible and could be folded accordingly for insertion. It could be selected according to physical features and menstrual flow.²

According to the menstrual cup statistics, in 2018, the global menstrual cup market amounted to an estimated \$1.2 billion and is expected to reach \$1.89 billion in 2026. Menstrual cups are more

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cost-effective than other methods. On average, it costs \$20–40 for a cup, and there is no need to purchase another one for at least six months. Tampons and pads can cost an average of \$50–150 a year.

Menstrual hygiene has a long and twisted history in India. Menstrual hygiene is related to gender equality, and lack of bathrooms is one of the critical issues for girls to drop out of school in rural areas. India has the lowest penetration of sanitary napkins in the world. Reports by top business players (P and G, Johnson, and Johnson) in this segment show the penetration of sanitary napkins in India at 15–20% of the population. However, the government's

National Family Household Survey claims higher penetration of an average of 48% in rural and 58% in urban areas. The prices of products are still high: an average 5–7-day period costs an average of ₹30 per month, which in regard to costs yearly of an average of ₹360/-.

In contrast, one cup is used for five years according to the brand and quality. The rate ranges from ₹500 to ₹1,000/-. At the same time, it is environmentally friendly, but sanitary napkins take years to decompose, directly contributing to the environmental hazard (33% are disposed of via burial and 15% are burnt).³

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

A study explored the acceptability and feasibility of using vaginal menstrual cups for hygiene management among school-aged girls in Tokarpa, Nepal. Girls between 13 and 19 years were supplied with vaginal menstrual cups. This explorative study shows evidence regarding using vaginal menstrual cups for menstrual hygiene management among schoolgirls. The menstrual cup is feasible and acceptable in this study, as it involves practical, economical, and environmental advantages. As such, this study offers local evidence that can inform local decision-making and contribute to setting a research agenda for using menstrual cups in low- and middle-income countries. The results were not only practical, economical, and environmental advantages of using the menstrual cup but also discomfort and concerns related to its use. Menstrual cups appear feasible and acceptable for menstrual hygiene management in the described target group and setting, while there would be a need for peer group and family support. The study compares how girls managed their menstruation before using the menstrual cup, perceived advantages of using menstrual cups, and discomfort and concerns. The students stated more positive points, like less leakage compared to sanitary napkins, reusable, eco-friendly as well, and economically benefiting them. This study focused on not using this menstrual cup during their periods. The exclusion criteria have not been explained on irregular menstruation; that is one of the faults. Fewer participants could not use the menstrual cup during this study period. This study recommends the future scope with an in-depth approach to identify the feasibility, acceptability, potential benefits, risks, and barriers of using menstrual cups.⁴

NEED OF THE STUDY

A study by the division of reproductive health (DRH) of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation and Institute of Developmental Studies (IDS), UK, states that the menstrual cup is an affordable and feasible product for safe menstrual practice. The study helps to identify the subjective experiences of adolescent girls of using menstrual cups and thereby know the positive and negative opinion on the same.

Another study reported experiences of women using Menstrual Cup of Free Will – A Qualitative Inquiry states that women feel more comfortable and convenient after using menstrual cups, but they faced a lot of challenges and discomforts during their initial use.⁵

In the medical setup, menstruation management is incredibly challenging and crucial. This is due to the lack of knowledge regarding safe menstrual hygiene practices and the lack of availability of affordable products for menstrual hygiene. To improve menstrual hygiene, an alternative product other than sanitary napkins, tampons, and clothes is the usage of vaginal menstrual cups. To improve menstrual hygiene and problems associated with menstruation, vaginal menstrual cups play a crucial

role. Therefore, the study aims to assess the lived-in experience and acceptability of using menstrual cups among nursing students in selected colleges.

To identify the lived-in experience of using the menstrual cup, the girls who have used a menstrual cup for at least one complete menstrual cycle were included. One of the most appropriate groups for this study was nursing students; they are the ones who were fonder of patient care. They play a significant role in health promotion, education, patient safety, and rehabilitation. A nursing group is a group of people whom ordinary people trust. The education provided by this group will be effective. So, a group of adolescent nursing students were selected for this study. Their sincere experience will be shared among ordinary people, patients, friends, and relatives. It will make a change in the hygienic menstrual practice, whether it is a positive or a negative experience.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

As the evidence on using menstrual cups is limited, this study aims to provide lived experiences and explore the in-depth expertise of nursing students using menstrual cups independently. The primary objective of this was to explore the in-depth experience of using menstrual cups among nursing students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on exploring the experiences and perceptions of B.Sc. Nursing students in Kochi who use menstrual cups. The research design is explorative, aiming to delve into the notes of menstrual cup usage among the target population. The study was conducted in a selected nursing college located in Kochi among the B.Sc. Nursing students who use menstrual cups, selected using a convenience sampling technique. The sample size is determined by reaching data saturation, ensuring that enough information is gathered to address the research objectives effectively. Participants were among the age group of 18–23 years and who used menstrual cups for at least one complete menstrual cycle were included in the study. A validated semi-structured questionnaire (Table 1) is used to collect data from the participants. Only the research team was involved in the data collection process, and ethical clearance was taken from the Institutional Research Board (ECASM-AIMS-2022-156). Informed consent was taken from each participant, and in-depth interviews were taken and recorded their opinion for transcription of data (Fig. 1).

RESULTS

Selected participants communicated with the investigator and shared their experiences on the structured questionnaire, as in (Fig. 2).

Theme I: General Opinion on Menstruation

Sub-theme I: Perception of Menstruation

Many students know menstruation is a typical physiological process in females of reproductive age due to hormonal changes, and they are aware of menstrual cycle phases and uterine lining shed. They mentioned the casual name of menstruation as periods, which comes in a 28-day cycle. *Code VI* "has stated that Menstruation is something most girl passes through their life... for some, it is easy, and for some, it is difficult... it varies according to their body size and functions."

It occurs every month till they attain menopause for 3–7 days regularly in normal cases. A participant mentioned the need for girls during menstruation to have open communication, a safe

environment, and to address the concerns related to menstrual difficulties. One of the participants believed that comprehensive menstrual health education is crucial to dispel myths, address misconceptions, and promote menstrual hygiene practices.

Table 1: Semi-structured questionnaire

1. What do you think about menstruation in general?
 - a) How would you usually feel when you are menstruating?
 - b) Which type of menstrual hygienic products were you using earlier?
2. How the days during menstruation a few months were back...?
 - a) Did menstruation affect your daily activities? If so, how...?
3. What was your first impression of a menstrual cup?
 - a) What did you expect from it?
 - b) Did you expect any risk? If so, specify.
4. What did you think about the awareness section during the menstrual cup?
 - a) Were there any queries you had?
5. Have you used a menstrual cup?
 - a) During how many menstrual cycles?
 - b) If not, why?
6. Could you explain the experience of using a menstrual cup?
 - a) What did you feel about using it?
7. How easy was it to use the menstrual cup?
 - a) How easy or difficult was it to change the cup?
8. What advantages did you feel about using a menstrual cup?
9. What are the difficulties you faced in using a menstrual cup?
10. What was your family's opinion on using menstrual cups?
11. Do you plan to continue the usage of a menstrual cup?
12. Would you recommend it to others? If yes, who?
 - a) What are the reasons for a recommendation?

Sub-theme II: Usual Feel on Menstrual Days

Many nursing students recognize menstruation as a natural and normal process experienced by females. Most have abdominal cramps, back pain, leg pain, mood swings, emotional frustrations, irritations, and nausea. Some participants find pads uncomfortable to use and commented on the sense of security they provide as poor due to unexpected leakage. Few have mentioned the concerns about the environmental impact of disposable pads. Code XI states, "I don't have any feelings while menstruating

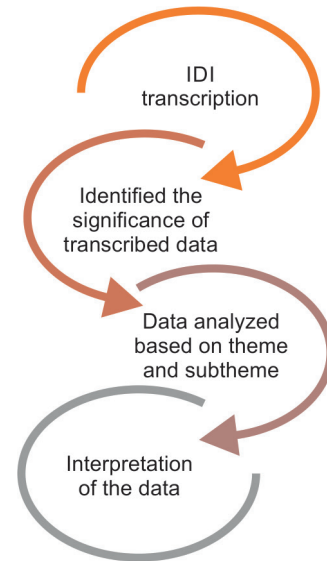


Fig. 1: Data analysis process

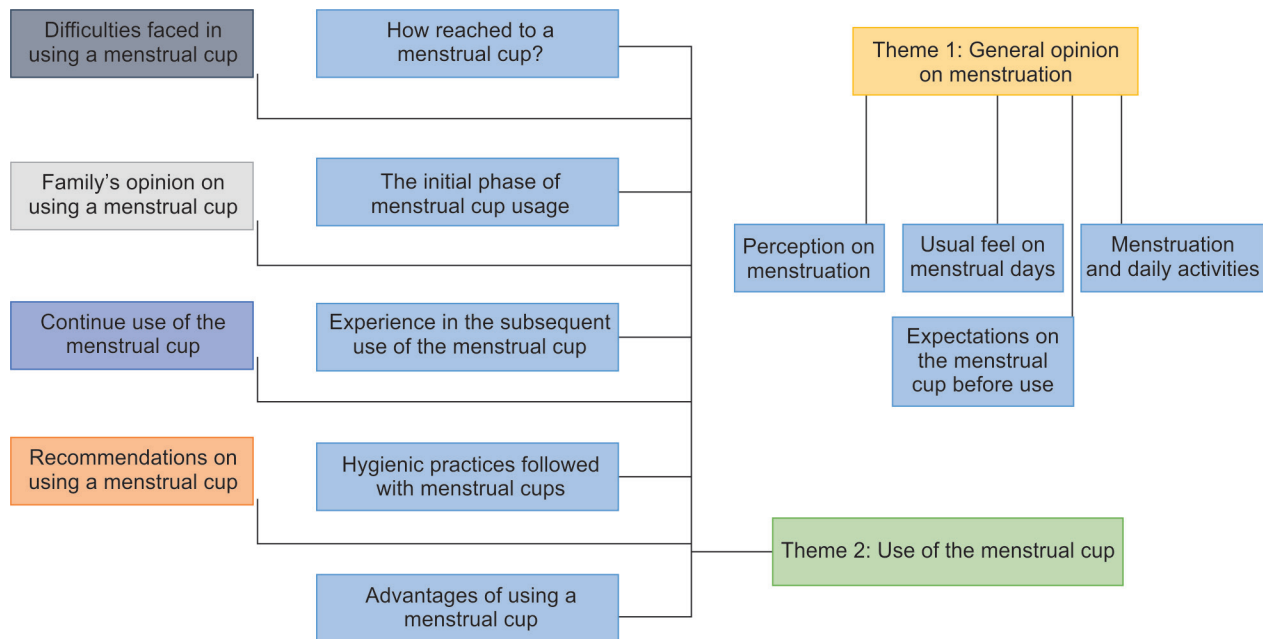


Fig. 2: Illustrations showing the themes and subthemes of this study

from the day itself. I don't have any pain that others are facing. I don't have a tummy ache or any irritability." The difficulty in changing pads, especially during traveling, is highlighted by many participants. Some girls develop contact dermatitis during menstruation due to prolonged exposure to moisture, friction, or the chemicals in menstrual products. All girls' monthly tasks were maintaining good hygiene, frequently changing pads, and using mild, hypoallergenic cleansing products.

Sub-theme III: Expectations on the Menstrual Cup Before Use

Most participants had great expectations while switching from sanitary pads to menstrual cups. Out of which, the foremost was on the aspects of comfort. They anticipated that the cup would fit securely and not cause any discomfort or irritation. Leakage prevention was the second opinion raised among the participants. The cup's design and seal would provide reliable protection, even during physical activities or long shifts. Participants expected the menstrual cup to be easy to insert and remove. Code 10 mentioned, "As a sports person, I was expecting menstrual cups to offer me leak-free sports days."

They may look forward to learning the proper technique quickly and efficiently, especially considering their medical background. Being aware of infection control and hygiene practices, nursing students expected the menstrual cup to be a hygienic option. They also anticipated that the cup's material and design would minimize the risk of infections or unpleasant odors. They had hopes for the long duration of use and the capacity of the use. Few had mentioned the several hours of using it without needing to be emptied since they had a limited flow. Importantly, some students have highlighted the impact on the environment using sanitary pads; menstrual cups would reduce their environmental footprint and decrease waste generation.

Sub-theme IV: Menstruation and Daily Activities

Many of the participants stated the difficulty in doing daily activities like discomfort, mood swings, pain, and other irritations. Unpredicting situations that happened with menstruation was another concern, like leakage, heavy flow, cramps, date/cycle changes, etc. They never had any options to take short breaks in between, as attendance is compulsory in nursing programs. Being in nursing programs, they received the highest knowledge on the use of menstrual products and minor ailments to cure the discomforts. Code V stated, "It affects my daily activities even my studies and it is very difficult to do clinical duties during my periods, especially with leakage problems and pain."

Theme II: Use of the Menstrual Cup

Sub-theme I: How reached to a Menstrual Cup?

Many participants decided to try a menstrual cup over a friend's recommendation. On the other hand, some were already urged to switch from sanitary pads as they were facing skin irritations and other difficulties. They searched on the internet, especially on YouTube, for the review and insertion of a menstrual cup. Code VI stated, "Once I got to know about menstrual cups, I started to see videos and articles about them in health magazines, then I found it pretty useful, so I started using a menstrual cup." Social media also played an influential role in the advertisement of menstrual cups. Community forums and online groups also played a significant role in getting to know about menstrual cups among the participants.

Sub-theme II: The Initial Phase of Menstrual Cup Usage

Most participants had queries about using menstrual cups, the insertion, position, hygienic practices, removal, difficulties, pain, and discomfort during use. Clarifying all these doubts through referring to the internet and talking to friends, sisters, and cousins built up confidence among the participants.

The initial phase of menstrual cup usage was like a learning experience for the participants. When they decided to switch to menstrual cups by researching menstrual cups and reading about their benefits, environmental impact, and personal experiences of others. Then they chose the right brand and size as per their body physique. They found out the best position for insertion, too, because inserting the cup can be easier in certain positions, such as sitting on the toilet, squatting, or standing with one leg raised. Each participant found out the position that works best for them. During the initial phase, they felt inconvenienced by inserting, as it was painful. Participants had a mixture of curiosity, apprehension, and excitement during their first attempt at inserting the cup. And they got familiar with the folding techniques and understood how the cup feels when inserted. Code X mentioned that "At first I was a bit skeptical about it and when I was trying to insert it was very painful that I thought it was not my cup of tea, but then after using it twice or thrice, it turned user-friendly and comforting and later there was no pain at all."

Some participants learned the process quickly, while others adjusted more. Patience, a willingness to learn, and an open-minded approach helped to navigate the initial phase of menstrual cup usage effectively.

Sub-theme III: Experience in the Subsequent Use of the Menstrual Cup

Some participants found menstrual cups comfortable to wear once they got used to them. However, the initial insertion was slightly uncomfortable or unfamiliar for others, especially if they were unfamiliar with internal menstrual products. Some of them initially struggled with inserting and removing the cup. Proper positioning, seal formation, and learning how to break the seal for removal are all part of the learning process. After using it for two to three consecutive cycles, they adapted to it and found it more convenient and leak-free. Learning to handle the cup without a mess was a concern for some participants, especially during hostel days. They had difficulty handling the cup hygienically. Sterilization was not possible as they were in a hostel. Many appreciated the environmental benefits of using a menstrual cup, as it reduces waste compared to disposable products. Some mentioned the convenience during physical activities like exercise, swimming, or sports, as they can be worn for longer periods without frequent changes. Sharing tips, challenges, and successes can create a supportive environment among friends. In an exemption, one participant dropped out of using the menstrual cup after repeated struggles and difficulties of insertion on consecutive periods.

Sub-theme IV: Hygienic Practices Followed with Menstrual Cups

Maintaining proper hygiene when using menstrual cups is essential to ensure comfort, prevent infections, and promote overall menstrual health. Nursing students, like anyone else using menstrual cups, should adhere to certain hygienic practices. Code IV has advised, "Before handling the menstrual cup, always wash

your hands with soap and clean water to prevent bacteria into the vaginal area.” Code 1 mentioned that “before inserting the cup, clean it with mild, unscented soap and warm water. Avoid using harsh chemicals or scented products that could irritate sensitive areas.” Most confirmed that they sterilized the cup by boiling it in water for a few minutes at the beginning and end of each menstrual cycle. This helps eliminate any bacteria or germs that may have accumulated. Code 12 said the importance of emptying the cup every 8–12 h or as needed to avoid leakage. “You might need to empty it more frequently if you have a heavier flow.” Code 8 has highlighted storing the menstrual cup in a breathable pouch or container between cycles to keep it clean and protected. A few have mentioned the vaginal wash liquids they use in between periods to avoid irritation and discomfort. It’s important to remember that each person’s body is different, so finding the right routine and practices that work for them is the key.

Sub-theme V: Advantages of Using a Menstrual Cup

Using a menstrual cup can offer several advantages for nursing students, just as it does for individuals from various walks of life. Nursing students have demanding schedules, and menstrual cups provide the convenience of longer wear time (8–12 h) compared to tampons or pads, reducing the need for frequent changes during busy shifts or classes. Menstrual cups are a more affordable alternative to continually buying disposable pads or tampons because they are reusable and can last several years with proper maintenance. Menstrual cups produce less trash than disposable items, which is something nursing students who care about the environment appreciate. This is in line with their principles of sustainability. Using a menstrual cup eliminates the need for plastic packaging associated with disposable menstrual products, contributing to reduced plastic waste. Menstrual cups don’t contain the scents and chemicals in some disposable items, which may reduce the risk of irritability for nursing students with sensitive skin. Menstrual cups keep menstrual fluid out of the air, which can help to prevent the smell of menstrual blood formation. Using a menstrual cup can enable nursing students to take control of their menstrual health and make decisions that align with their responsibilities as healthcare advocates. Menstrual cups are an expensive initial investment, but their lengthy lifespan makes them a cost-effective purchase over time, which may appeal to nursing students on a tight budget. Once they get used to them, many participants find menstruation cups comfortable and value the absence of moisture that comes with pads.

Sub-theme VI: Difficulties Faced in Using a Menstrual Cup

Many participants encountered various difficulties as they used menstrual cups for the first time. Initially, it was challenging to insert and remove the cups from the vagina. Some had difficulty identifying the correct size of the cup as they were not aware of which size was suited for them. The majority had discomfort and pain while inserting and removing it. Code 8 stated, “I didn’t have the proper knowledge on how to use it so while using it I had some discomfort and pain.” Initially, due to the wrong size selected, some had difficulty leaking in the first days of periods; they used pads to support the cup. Most of the participants were residing in the hostel, so a few of them lacked the facility to sterilize the cup. Few have shared the difficulty in convincing the family members to use the cup.

Sub-theme VII: Family’s Opinion on Using a Menstrual Cup

Some families were more open to trying new products and innovations, viewing menstrual cups as a modern and environmentally friendly alternative, and they supported the participants. On the other hand, few were more conservative and preferred traditional menstrual hygiene methods, so they weren’t allowed to use the cup initially. Few participants were using menstrual cups without the family’s consent. Code 9 responded, “I don’t know what the point is in telling and involving the family members to decide on this matter, I think there is no need to tell all these things to the family because it’s our decision. Our body, our Menstruation... So, it’s my responsibility to take care and handle the situations.” Families with easy access to accurate information about menstrual cups and their benefits were more understanding and supportive. Lack of information or exposure to misinformation leads to misconceptions and hesitations, so one participant suggested that while informing them about the menstrual cup, all the pros and cons should be explained to them at once.

Sub-theme VIII: Continue Use of the Menstrual Cup

Most participants addressed the challenges of using it in the hostel but still expressed a positive experience to continue using it. They understand the importance of sharing their views to maximize the use of menstrual cups, so they highlighted the advantages of using them again when they said that they will use them in the future too. Maintaining hygiene while using menstrual cups, especially in shared facilities, is a challenging task, and very few are hesitant to continue using menstrual cups only for this reason.

Sub-theme IX: Recommendations on using a Menstrual Cup.

All participants are ready to recommend the use of menstrual cups to their friends, family, and relatives. Code 11 highlights, “Actually I recommend it to all those women whom I know including my family and cousins even my friends, I feel very comfortable so that I am recommending it to others.”

DISCUSSIONS

Through this qualitative study, the key findings collected were highlighted under the main themes of general opinion on menstruation, use of menstrual cups, family’s opinion, and recommendations to others.

In 2020, a cross-sectional study was conducted in Iran, focusing on women aged 18–50 with regular menstrual cycles and a minimum of three prior uses of menstrual cups. Participants were selected through continuous sampling and completed a web-based questionnaire encompassing demographic information, along with a checklist assessing acceptability and safety. The study revealed an overall satisfaction score of 6.54 ± 0.76 for menstrual cup usage, with a mean leakage score of 5.25 ± 1.63 . Among those experiencing leakage, 83% reported health concerns related to vaginal pain during removal, and 83.9% had discovered the menstrual cup through social networks. Remarkably, 98.6% of participants recommended menstrual cups to other women based on their positive experiences. These findings provide insights into the acceptability and safety perceptions surrounding menstrual cup usage among Iranian women.⁶ Similarly, this study participants also expressed high acceptance for the use of menstrual cups.

In 2015, a qualitative exploratory study in Zambia focused on girls aged 14–18 who had recently begun menstruating. The study incorporated 12 in-depth interviews and six focus group discussions.

The findings revealed a general lack of awareness about menstruation among the participants, with many reporting limited knowledge of the physiological aspects of menstruation. Challenges in menstrual hygiene were highlighted, including the use of non-absorbent and uncomfortable menstrual clothing, coupled with insufficient access to sanitary materials, water, and proper hygiene and sanitation facilities in schools. The girls expressed concerns about experiencing friction burns on their thighs during the arduous journey to school. Moreover, fear of embarrassment and menstrual leakage adversely affected school attendance and participation in physical activities. These outcomes underscore the need for comprehensive menstrual health education and improved infrastructure to address the multifaceted challenges faced by adolescent girls in managing their menstrual hygiene.⁷ This study also took the participant's concerns on the use of menstrual cups on first use and subsequent use. Out of which few concerns expressed are the unavailability of cup sterilization and continuous duty schedules due to which delay in emptying the cups on time. Girls in this study also highlighted the importance of awareness about menstrual hygienic practices and the possibility of different options available in the market.

A systematic review was conducted in a mixed-methods study in 2020 to evaluate menstrual cup usage among women of childbearing age, employing criteria based on data extracted independently by two critics. The selection process initially involved 737 titles, narrowed down to 38 studies. The acceptability of menstrual cups ranged from 35% to 90%, with users commonly expressing greater comfort compared to tampons and sanitary napkins. Approximately 48–94% of women adapted to continued use, while 10–45% found it challenging. Safety considerations revealed reported incidents of toxic shock syndrome, mechanical entrapment, allergies, and a heightened risk of expulsion among intrauterine device users. These findings contribute valuable insights into the varied experiences and considerations surrounding menstrual cup acceptability and safety within the childbearing age group.⁸ Out of 12 participants in this study, only one withheld the use of a menstrual cup due to the unavailability of the cup sterilization process.

Between January and November 2013, a mixed study was conducted in Durban, South Africa, employing a two-period crossover trial at a single site. Participants, aged 18–45 with regular menstrual cycles, were included if they had no intention of becoming pregnant, were using effective contraception, and had no sexually transmitted infections. Through three menstrual cycles, baseline and monthly follow-up interviews were conducted, with 124 women initially assessed, 110 randomly selected for menstrual product use, and 105 completing follow-up visits. The menstrual cup was favorably evaluated over pads or tampons, deemed better for use, comfortable, suitable for collecting menstrual blood, and of good quality. The study concludes that while menstrual cup acceptance was limited among the population accustomed to pads or tampons, it demonstrated potential for users in low-resource settings.⁹ Similarly, this study also revealed the advantages of menstrual cups over sanitary pads.

In a 2020 study, researchers aimed to improve the safety and categorization of menstrual cups, which are diverse in shapes, sizes, and firmness. These factors impact leakage, comfort, and potential issues like injury and discomfort. The study focused on comparing the physical and mechanical properties of 14 highly rated menstrual cups in a lab setting, including dimensions, volume, and firmness. The design aspects such as shape, material, and features were

also compared. The participants in the study were women under 30 who had never given birth. The findings revealed that women lack sufficient information when selecting a menstrual cup. The study emphasizes the need for a correlation between size, shape, and firmness to help women choose a suitable menstrual cup, reducing the risk of injury. The recommendation from the study is to categorize menstrual cups based on firmness, ranging from very soft to very firm, as an initial step.¹⁰

A study was conducted at the Gujarat Medical Education and Research Society, Medical College, and Hospital in India to evaluate the adaptability and effectiveness of menstrual cups compared to traditional menstrual sanitary protection methods like sanitary pads, tampons, or cloth. The study involved 158 participants aged 20–50 years with regular menstrual cycles. Participants were provided with menstrual cups and used them for three consecutive menstrual cycles. Detailed explanations about usage were given, and feedback was collected using a structured questionnaire. The findings indicated high satisfaction with menstrual cups, with 80% finding insertion easy and 90% reporting easy removal. Leakage was reported by 3–6% of participants, and side effects such as rashes, dryness, or infection were observed. The study concluded that menstrual cups pose no significant health risks and are well-accepted by many women without the need for medical intervention.

Limitations

The study had a few limitations, like the study focused only on a small group of nursing students, which limited the generalizability of the study. The study may not account for the changes in attitude or experiences over time as the data were collected only once from the participants. The finding might have been influenced by the cultural practices of the setting, as there was only a limited setting involved in this study.

As this study included only female participants, it is recommended to consider male perspectives, particularly in nursing programs, to explore their knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding menstrual cup usage. Also, it is suggested to study the influence of cultural practices on menstrual cup usage and accessibility.

CONCLUSION

This study encompassed the view of nursing students on the use of menstrual cups and stated the challenges, advantages, and recommendations for future use. Overall, the majority of participants were in favor of the transitional change from traditional menstrual practices to the use of menstrual cups. In a broader aspect, this study implies eco-friendly practices to reduce environmental impact. The positive experiences reported in the study can serve as a basis for menstrual cup advocacy among nursing students. Advocacy initiatives can focus on dispelling myths, addressing concerns, and promoting the benefits of menstrual cups as a viable and sustainable menstrual hygiene option.

Clinical Significance

Nursing students are the medium of awareness to the public, and with the changing trends in menstrual practices, they can be the best reference to understand the experience in the use of menstrual cups. Further research areas suggested to explore this study are the prevalence and long-term impact of menstrual cup usage among nursing students, including opinions from males.

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