

## WOMEN'S FEAR ABOUT MENSTRUATION

**Dr.SABIYA.HAMIDMIYA**

Guest Lecturer in Dept of Sociology

Jnan Karanji University Halhalli

Dist:Bidar State :Karnataka.

### **Abstract:**

The unjust fear of menstruation is known as monophobia. Menstruation often known as a women's "menstrual cycle" or "period" is the process in which women, from the time of puberty until menopause, release blood and other substances from the lining of the uterus at varying intervals of around once per month the only time a women will not experience menstruation is while she is pregnant.

Monophobia can affect both men and women because it is a psychological problem rather than a biological one. Menstruation may be viewed as "filthy" or "grotesque" by someone who has monophobia, despite the fact that it is an essential component of human biology and effective reproduction. Simple ignorance of physiology and the advantages of menstruation may be the root cause of an unreasonable fear of getting your period.

Many women go through a variety of physical and emotional changes in the days before their period. While some people may simply feel a little uncomfortable, others may suffer from monophobia, a disorder marked by increased anxiety and emotional anguish. Managing your worry prior to your period is essential for keeping up your general wellbeing. This article will look at monophobia methods are comfort during these days.

---

**Key words: Menstruation, Monophobia, anxiety, emotional,**

### **Introduction:**

The word "menstruation" is etymologically related to "moon". The terms "menstruation" and "menses" are derived from the Latin *mensis* (month), which in turn relates to the Greek *mene* (moon) and to the roots of the English words *month* and *moon*. cross-cultural study shows that, while taboos about menstruation are nearly universal, and while many of these involve notions of uncleanness, numerous menstrual traditions "bespeak quite different, even opposite, purposes and meanings. In some traditional societies, menstrual rituals are

experienced by women as protective and empowering, offering women a space set apart from the male gaze and from unwanted sexual or domestic pressures and demands. An instructive example is provided by the anthropologist Wynne Maggi, who describes the communal *bashali* (large menstrual house) of women in the Kalasha Valley (northwestern Pakistan) as their 'most holy place', respected by men, and serving as women's all-female organizing centre for establishing and maintaining gender solidarity and power. According to one body of cultural evolutionary scholarship, the idea that menstrual blood marks the body as periodically sacred was initially established by female coalitions in their own interests, although later, with the rise of cattle-ownership and patriarchal power, these same beliefs and taboos were harnessed by religious patriarchs to intensify women's oppression.

Menstruation in Indian society is seen as an unhygienic dirty and impure phenomenon and menstrual hygiene management is a neglected issue in India and in other developing nations. On an average a woman is likely to experience nearly 1800 days of her life menstruating. In other words, a woman approximately spends five years of her life menstruating that is why it is important to understand the restrictions and views of menstruating women of Hindus, Muslims, and Orthodox Jews still abide by their cultural taboos. An understanding of these beliefs will help in dealing with people of these faith and practice. Feelings about menstruation represent biases against women. The extent of some of the taboos explored through the critical review indicates due to lack of understanding; many have no real relation to menstruation. Thus the objective is to understand the religious origin of biases against menstruation can help women as they struggle against cultural prejudices. Of course hypothetical relationship between religion and biases against women is bi-directional between dependent and independent variables.

The aim of this article is to analyze the fears about menstruation and health that have been passed down to us by oral transmission from a gender perspective. A qualitative study, whose design was the Grounded Theory, performed in Seville, Spain, with 24 rural and urban women from different generations, young (18-25, 26-35 years), middle aged (36-45, 46-55, 56-65 years) and elderly (> 65 years). The semi-structured interview was used as a data collection technique. The discourses were subjected to content analysis, following the steps of Grounded Theory. The results highlight the abundant fears related to use of water during menstruation, with very harmful effects to health. As a conclusion to highlight the lack of women's knowledge about reproductive health and that despite Health Education campaigns there are still ancient misconceptions present about menstruation.

**Fears related to water use and disease:** It is a set of widespread fears. They are based primarily on the fact that menstrual blood is incompatible with water; therefore, the minimum contact menstruating woman have with water can produce devastating effects on their health. This fear was very present in informers over sixty-five. Nowadays, as has been proven in research, it is still being transmitted in some women, but it has lost a lot of

strength. The aim was to protect them from possible diseases or affections. In Figure those conditions that have appeared after the analysis of the speeches are reflected.

**Fears relative to hygiene and menstruation:** The belief in the harmfulness of menstruating women is very old, as it was believed that menstrual blood contained strange, irritating, toxic or poisonous substances. Caius Pliny the second, Pliny the Elder, in his important Natural History work offers an extensive list of Roman beliefs about menstruation finding in research that many of these ancient false fears are common to women today.

**Fear of menstruation being "cut":** The origin is that menstrual blood is incompatible with water. Although, as informers have said, due to their relationship with the belief that menstruation produces a "state of heat in the body" which has to be maintained during those days. The main consequences of a "cut" in menstruation is that when it returns it is more painful, that cysts or tumors because blood that has been "curdled" inside the body, and that this could even disappear definitively, with the consequent inability to have children *It was previously said not to wash your hair, clean yourself but do not shower Do not rinse with cold water as your menstruation will disappear. Do not you to wash your hair because your menstruation will be cut.*

De Beauvoir, in his book "The Second Sex" states that the moment a woman is capable of giving birth, she becomes impure. He reviews the severe taboos that primitive societies make about girls on their first day of menstruation, such as leaving them exposed on the roof of a house, abandoned in a cabin situated outside the town limits, even not being able to touch nor look at them. Once past this first test, menstrual taboos are less severe but still rigorous and strict. According to different authors, menstruation should not be seen as something dirty or a sign of inferiority but to turn it into a biological warning of our organism when it breaks the chronological cycle.

**Fear of going crazy:** It consists of the fear that menstruating woman can go crazy if they have a shower or bathe during menstruation. It is closely related to the previous fear. *In the village there was a woman who was bathing during her period and suddenly ;ay! ran out of her house naked like a mad woman, because that is terrible, that woman went crazy, lost her head because of doing that, I'll tell my daughter.* The fact of giving an example of an actual case is common in informers to which they associate this evil because of having washed their hair or showered during menstruation, thus the fear of the community is strengthened: *do not you wash your hair because your menstruation will be cut.* As shown in the results, there are numerous fears and misconceptions regarding menstruation without any scientific or biological basis that demonstrates the complete ignorance of women themselves about menstruation and the lack of research."The same feminist literature suffers from lack of clarity in this regard, firstly disregarding this reality in the lives of many women, for the sake of equality we did not take into account this difference, or directly denying the influence or determinants of the altered menstrual cycle, for fear that the lives of women were considered inferior or conditioned by the fact of menstruation.

**Fear of suffering an embolism or becoming paralytic:** Fear also related to the fact of wetting one's hair *if I washed my hair when I had my period I could have, say, an embolism or something like that and be paralyzed. It is what I was told. If I washed my hair when I had my period.* Some young informants refer to how their mothers have taught them *When I was twelve or thirteen so that I would know that I could not wash my hair when I had my period.* The fear that menstruation can be cut off by having sour or cold foods was observed in some informants, young and old, *You could not bathe, you could not have things with vinegar nor oranges during their season ...no sour things ... nor be scared because it would be cut off. You could not have ice cream because your period would be cut off.* Fear was repeated that menstruation is cut off or you go crazy for the slightest contact with water. *That was, to be exact, no daughter, no, you cannot wash your hair!.*

According to other authors there are a great number of topics, misconceptions, referring to women, which are transmitted from generation to generation without any scientific basis with undoubted impact on their health which confirms that the lack of studies, research and fact-finding by professionals has frequently led to a transmission of inappropriate knowledge. Nurses play an important role in the eradication of these misconceptions by promoting health through specific health education programs that affect these erroneous beliefs and eliminate them as has been demonstrated in research. Despite the actions and campaigns devoted to health education on physiological changes in women many false millennial beliefs regarding menstruation are still present in our days.

The main fears obtained in research regarding menstruation refer to hygiene that forbids menstruating women the slightest contact with water due to the risk of disease (stroke, paralysis, dementia). These prohibitions may originate in the necessary control of water as a scarce resource in the areas studied. Therefore, the above prohibitions relating to menstruation constituted a form of discrimination and social, political and religious segregation, a way of manipulating women whose main purpose in many cases was economic. The eldest women are the ones who have more fears regarding water hygiene during menstruation; contact being relegated to the bare minimum. Even today, many women of all ages in both rural and urban contexts remain subject to false fears and pressures, like, "going crazy" because of having a shower during menstruation. With regard to mothers and childless women there was no significant difference.

It has been shown that the higher the informer's educational level, the fewer the fears shown regarding menstruation. Lack of knowledge of women about reproductive health and "control of their bodies" is highlighted. Nursing in a fundamental discipline for health promotion, developing education programs about the menstrual cycle for women so that they understand menstruation as a normal physiological process without fear or false pressures.

## **Conclusion:**

Monophobia as the name suggests is menstruation phobia or period phobia. It refers to an intense fear or anxiety surrounding menstruation, while monophobia is not recognized as a

distinct clinical diagnosis in the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorder (DSM-5), it falls under the category of specific phobia, which includes irrational fears specific objects or situations. The prevalence of monophobia is not well established due to the lack of specific diagnostic criteria. However, there are women who might experience some degree of fear or anxiety related to menstruation. The fear can range from mild discomfort to severe phobia. The fear of periods can stem from a variety of factors which differ from person to person. Some women might have experienced traumatic or negative events related to menstruation in their past, such as embarrassing situations, painful periods or cultural taboos relating to menstruation. These experiences can contribute to the development of fear and anxiety, says the expert. Apart from this, societal stigma, lack of education, and misconceptions about menstruation might also play a role in triggering fear and discomfort.

## References

1. Onyegebu N. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene among women and young females in rural eastern Nigeria. Journal of the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria. 2011. <http://stanonline.org/journal/pdf/JSTAN-Nkadi%202011.pdf> (accessed 4 February 2013).
2. Pillitteri S. School menstrual hygiene management in Malawi: more than toilets [master's thesis]. WaterAidReport.CranfieldUniversity;2011.[https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.inclusivewash.org.au%2FLiteratureRetrieve.aspx%3FID%3D83767&ei=Kp5EUaWQM7bk4AP2uoCoBA&usg=AFQjCNHG0euqN80kqGaJ\\_wQkLIZx95Bpw&sig2=j5zqG353Tf7N\\_cl8wycrSg&bvm=bv.43828540,d.dmg](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=0CDIQFjAA&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.inclusivewash.org.au%2FLiteratureRetrieve.aspx%3FID%3D83767&ei=Kp5EUaWQM7bk4AP2uoCoBA&usg=AFQjCNHG0euqN80kqGaJ_wQkLIZx95Bpw&sig2=j5zqG353Tf7N_cl8wycrSg&bvm=bv.43828540,d.dmg) (accessed 6 January 2013).
3. Population Reference Bureau. The world's women and girls: 2011 data sheet. Population Reference Bureau. Data sheet, 2011. <http://www.prb.org/pdf11/world-women-girls-2011-datasheet.pdf> (accessed 20 January 2013).
4. Patil R, Agarwal L, Khan MI, Gupta SK, Vedapriya DR, Raghavia M, *et al*. Beliefs about menstruation: A study from rural Pondicherry. Indian J Med Specialities 2011;2:23-6.
5. Puri S, Kapoor S. Taboos and Myths associated with women health among rural and urban adolescent girls in Punjab. Indian J Community Med 2006;31:168-70. Sommer M. An early window of opportunity for promoting girls' health: policy implications of the girl's puberty book project in Tanzania. Int Electron J Health Educ.

2011;14:77-92. [http://growandknow.org/11\\_M-Sommer.pdf](http://growandknow.org/11_M-Sommer.pdf) (accessed 20 January 2013).

6. Stefanie Kaiser. Menstrual Hygiene Management.2008. Available from: <http://www.sswm.info/content/menstrual-hygiene-management>. [Last accessed on 2014 Aug 09].
7. Sommer M. Ideologies of sexuality, menstruation and risk: girls' experiences of puberty and schooling in northern Tanzania. *Cult Health Sex.* 2009 May 1;11(4):383-98. <http://www.tandfonline.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/doi/abs/10.1080/13691050902722372> (accessed 6 January 2013).
8. Sommer M. Where the education system and women's bodies collide: the social and health impact of girls' experiences of menstruation and schooling in Tanzania. *J Adolesc.* 2010;33(4):521-29. <http://www.sciencedirect.com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/science/article/pii/S0140197109000347> (accessed 6 January 2013).
9. SOS Childrens' Village. Social taboos damage the health of girls and women. 2014. Available from: <http://www.soschildrensvillages.org.uk/news/blog/social-taboos-damage-the-health-of-girls-and-women>. [Last accessed on 2014 Aug 12].