
Perception and Level of Knowledge About Menarche in Student of SMP Negeri 2 Tomohon

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Abstract

Adolescence is characterized by physiological, psychological, and social changes, one of which is menarche. The lack of knowledge makes some students experience confusion, anxiety, and embarrassment when experiencing it. This study aims to find out the perception and level of knowledge of SMP Negeri 2 Tomohon students about menarche. The type of analytical descriptive research with a cross sectional approach on 86 students in grades VII–VIII used a total sampling technique. Data were collected with questionnaires that had been tested for validity and reliability, then analyzed univariately. The results showed that the majority of respondents were 13 years old (61.6%) with the most menarche age of 11 years (57.0%). The main source of information comes from parents (82.9%). Most female students have a negative perception (57.0%), while the highest level of knowledge is in the sufficient category (72.1%).

Keywords: Perception, Knowledge, Menarche, Young Women

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is an important phase in human life that lasts at the age of 10–18 years and is characterized by changes in physiological, psychological, behavioral, and sexual maturity (Fiah & Futriani, 2023). One of the main events during puberty in adolescent girls is the first menstruation (menarche), which generally occurs at the age of 10–16 years with an average of about 12 years (Proverawati & Misaroh, 2022). The age of menarche varies from individual to individual and can be categorized into early (<12 years), normal (12–13 years), and late (>14 years) menarche (Mulyani et al., 2022).

Menarche is a sign of the maturity of the reproductive organs and the culmination of primary and secondary physical changes. However, menarche that occurs early can have physical and psychological impacts if adolescents do not have adequate mental readiness and knowledge. This unpreparedness can lead to stress, anxiety, embarrassment, and poor personal hygiene behavior, which is at risk of causing infections and reproductive health disorders (Agusputri et al., 2023; Manasseh et al., 2022). Therefore, providing clear and easy-to-understand information is essential to help young women be better prepared for menarche.

Data from the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI) shows that the majority of adolescent girls in Indonesia experience menarche at the age of 11–14 years, with the highest proportion at the age of 11–12 years and 13–14 years (SKI, 2023). In North Sulawesi Province, the distribution of menarche age is relatively in line with the national average. However, Tomohon City has a lower average age of menarche, which is around 12.01 years, compared to other districts/cities in North Sulawesi (Risksedas, 2018).

Based on an initial survey at SMP Negeri 2 Tomohon, it is known that some students have experienced menarche at the age of 11-12 years. Even though some students already have an understanding of menstruation, there are still students who feel confused, anxious, and embarrassed when experiencing menarche for the first time. In addition, there is no socialization or special education program about menarche in schools, so the source of information for students mostly comes from parents, friends, and social media. This condition shows the importance of research to find out

the perception and level of knowledge of female students in dealing with menarche as the basis for planning reproductive health education in schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a type of analytical descriptive design research with a *cross sectional* approach that aims to obtain a general overview or description of the research object being studied. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Tomohon in June 2025, with a population of 86 students in grades VII and VIII at SMP Negeri 2 Tomohon and the sample used in the study was the sum of the total population or a total sampling of 86 students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Univariate Analysis

Characteristics of Students Based on Age

Table 1. Frequency distribution based on the age of the student

Age	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
12	12	14,0
13	53	61,6
14	20	23,3
15	1	1,2
Total	86	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>		

Based on table 1 above, it can be seen that the age of female students is most in the age group of 13 years with a percentage of 61.6% or around 53 students out of 86 respondents.

Characteristics of female students based on menarche age

Table 2. Frequency distribution based on the age of the first menstruation (menarche)

Age	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
9	2	2,3
10	21	24,4
11	49	57,0
12	13	15,1
13	1	1,2
Total	86	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>		

Based on table 2, it can be seen that the age of first menstruation of female students is at the highest age of 11 years (57.0%) or around 49 female students and the incidence of menarche in female students at the earliest age of 9 years is (2.3%) and at the age of 10 years is around (24.4%) or around 21 female students.

Characteristics based on having heard of menarche (first menstruation)

Table 3. Frequency distribution based on having heard of menarche

	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
Not yet	4	4,7
Already	82	95,3
Total	86	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>		

Based on the table above, it is known that of the 86 respondents, as many as 82 students (95.3%) have heard information about menarche (early menstruation). Meanwhile, only 4 female students (4.7%) had never heard of menarche.

Characteristics based on information sources

Table 4. Frequency distribution by source of information

Resources	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
Media	10	12,2
Internet	10	12,2
TV	0	0,0
Magazines/Newspapers/Articles	0	0,0
Shutdown	0	0,0
People Around	72	87,8
Parents	68	82,9
Teacher	0	0,0
Peers	4	4,9
Surrounding Communities	0	0,0
Total	82	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>		

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the majority of students obtained information about menarche from people around them, as much as (87.8%) 72 students. The surrounding people have a lot of information, namely information from parents (82.9%) or 68 students.

Students' Perceptions of Menarche

Table 5. Frequency distribution based on students' perceptions of menarche

Perceptions of Students	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
Positive	37	43,0
Negatives	49	57,0
Total	86	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>		

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the perception of female students towards menarche as many as 49 students (57.0%) showed a negative attitude and only 37 people (43.0%) showed a positive attitude. This shows that the majority of adolescents do not have sufficient emotional readiness and understanding of menarche. This negative attitude can be caused by a lack of information received, feelings of fear, shame, or anxiety, and a lack of support from the surrounding environment such as family or school.

Student's level of knowledge about menarche

Table 6. Frequency distribution based on the level of knowledge of the student about menarche

Knowledge Level	Frequency (n)	Present (%)
Good	15	17,4
Enough	62	72,1
Less	9	10,5
Total	86	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>		

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are in the category of sufficient knowledge as many as 62 people (72.1%), who have good knowledge as many as 15 respondents (17.4%), while 9 respondents (10.5%) are still in the category of lack of knowledge. These results show that although most of the respondents have adequate understanding, there are still a number of respondents with low knowledge, so additional educational efforts are needed to improve understanding evenly.

Knowledge level based on questionnaire

Table 7. Frequency distribution based on Knowledge level of students based on questionnaires

Questions	Knowledge Level						Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Good		enough		Less			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Understanding Menstruation (Menarche)	67	77,9	18	20,9	1	1,2	86	100,0
Symptoms During Menstruation (Menarche)	30	34,9	21	24,4	35	40,7	86	100,0
Age menarche occurs	2	2,3	68	79,1	16	18,6	86	100,0
Influencing Factors	3	3,5	46	53,5	37	43,0	86	100,0
Personal hygiene during menstruation	45	52,3	38	44,2	3	3,5	86	100,0
Abnormalities during menstruation	38	44,2	41	47,7	7	8,1	86	100,0
<i>Source : Primary Data</i>								

Based on the table above, the majority of students' knowledge level is still lacking in knowledge about the factors that affect menarche, namely, 43.0% (37 students), the majority is sufficient in knowledge about the age when menarche occurs by 79.1% (68 students), and the majority are good in knowledge about the meaning of menarche by 77.9% (67 students) and in knowledge about personal hygiene during menstruation as much as 52.3% (45 students).

DISCUSSION

The results of the study on the respondents, namely students in grades VII and VIII which showed the results that out of 86 students, as many as 47 students (54.7) were 13 years old. The World Health Organization defines that the age of adolescents ranges from 10-19 years old (Alam et al., 2021), this is an important transition phase from children to adolescents, characterized by many physical and psychological changes. These results are in line with the research of Alam et al., (2021) which stated that the majority of respondents in their research on menarche were also in the age range of 13 years (around 50%). This reinforces that the age of 12-13 years is a common phase experienced by puberty changes, a general phase of puberty changes, including preparations for menarche.

The results of the study based on the age of the first menstruation (menarche) most occurred at the age of 11 years, which was as many as 49 female students (57.0%). In addition, there were also respondents who experienced early menarche at the age of 9 years (2.3%) and the second most at the age of 10 years (24.4%). According to proverawati & Misaroh (2022), the normal age of menarche in adolescent girls in Indonesia ranges from 10-16 years, with an average age of 12-13 years. The results of this study show that the majority of female students experience menarche at a relatively early age, namely 11 years old. Menarche that occurs at an early age is still normal, but it can be influenced by several biological and non-biological factors. Genetic factors play a big role because a child's menarche age is often not much different from the menarche age of his mother or sister. In addition, nutritional status is also a very determining factor. According to Khamidah, M. (2021), adolescents with even excess nutritional status are more likely to experience puberty faster because high levels of body fat and leptin hormone can trigger an acceleration of reproductive development. Psychosocial

factors such as parental upbringing, family relationships, and media exposure also contribute to the acceleration or delay of Wibisono, & Kurniati's menarche. (2020). Therefore, the results of this study show that the most menarche age at 11 years old, although still in the normal category, can be considered as a relatively early menarche age. This is important because the faster age of menarche needs to be a special concern in the reproductive health aspect of adolescents. Early menarche can have an impact on the psychological readiness of adolescents who may not be fully prepared for their body changes, potentially causing anxiety, fear, or confusion.

Based on the results of table 3 above, it is known that out of a total of 86 respondents, as many as 82 students (95.2%) already know what menarche is. Meanwhile, only 4 female students (4.7%) had never heard of menarche. This suggests that most college students have had early exposure to information about menstruation, but behind that, although almost all have heard of menarche, the source of information they get is not necessarily complete or inaccurate. Because students may know in general, for example, only know that menstruation is "menstruating" but do not understand how the process is, such as, early signs, how to maintain proper hygiene, or the psychological and social impacts that may occur. This result is in line with research conducted by Pebrianti and Manase (2022) which states that although most young women have known or have received information, their level of understanding is still quite low and most only know menarche on the surface without understanding the biological aspects or psychological readiness that need to be prepared. This study also showed that 82 respondents who answered had heard of menstruation, who received the most information about menarche from people around them, especially from parents as many as 68 female students (82.9%). Another source obtained was from the internet (12.2%) or as many as 10 students, while from teachers and peers the number was smaller. This shows that parents play an important role as the main source of information about menarche because the results obtained from the source of information from parents are larger.

Based on the results of the study on the perception of female students, it is known that most female students (57.0%) have a negative perception of menarche, while only (43.0%) show a positive perception of this finding illustrates that the majority of adolescent girls are not emotionally ready when they first experience menstruation. This negative perception can be influenced by a lack of knowledge that causes fear, shame, or anxiety, as well as a lack of support from the environment such as family and school. These results are in line with research by Ramulya et al. (2022) in Indonesia which found that some female students consider menarche to be something dirty, painful, and embarrassing, as well as feeling afraid and embarrassed because of the lack of information they receive. Another study conducted by Periyasamy et al., (2024) states that from the perspective of young women, many young women still feel incapable of facing the changes of puberty because they feel embarrassed and incapable of adapting to new conditions, so more intensive education and support efforts are needed to help them face this transition period with confidence.

Based on the results of the research related to knowledge, most of the students have a sufficient level of knowledge about menarche (72.1%), while (10.5%) are knowledgeable, and (17.4%) still have less knowledge. These results show that the majority of female students already have a basic understanding of menarche, but the knowledge they have is not completely comprehensive so there are still important aspects that are not well understood. This condition indicates that the sufficient category cannot be said to be optimal, because students still need additional education so that their knowledge increases to the good category so that they are able to understand menarche more thoroughly and are ready to face it. As shown in table 6, the level of knowledge of the majority of students is still lacking on the question of factors that affect menstruation. These factors include nutrition, physical activity, stress, sleep patterns, and general health conditions that can have an impact on the regularity and quality of menstruation. This lack of knowledge can be caused because students do not understand the relationship between lifestyle and reproductive health, so it is easier for them to understand the basic meaning of menstruation than to recognize the factors that can affect it. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Kurniawati, P., & Mauliati, D. (2022) in

Aceh Besar, which shows that information, family support, peers, and age have a significant effect on the level of knowledge of students in dealing with menarche. Another study conducted by Nainar et al., (2024) also shows that female students with low knowledge, especially about the factors that cause menstruation, tend to have lower readiness in dealing with menarche. This shows that although most of the respondents already have sufficient knowledge, this understanding is not yet fully able to form positive perceptions. This means that the knowledge possessed by female students is not strong enough to change the perspective of female students to be more prepared and calm in dealing with menarche. Therefore, increasing family knowledge, and learning at school is very important so that students not only have knowledge, but also are able to form positive perceptions that support readiness to face menarche. According to the researcher, the difference in the level of knowledge of students in this study was influenced by how each student understood information about menarche. The number of female students with knowledge in the category is quite much higher than those who are well-informed because there are still limitations in the ability to think, receive, and process the information obtained. This condition also explains why some students are still in the category of lack of knowledge. This is in line with the understanding that knowledge is not something that is immediately available, but the result of a learning process that continues to evolve along with the entry of new understandings and experiences. The more information that adolescents get, the more knowledge they have. Knowledge is one of the important elements needed by a person to perform an action. Adolescents tend to be interested in new things acquired through sight and hearing, so that such information can form knowledge. The knowledge you have will then foster awareness that is reflected in a person's behavior. (Deviana, 2021). Therefore, it is important for families, teachers, and health workers to provide education that is early and comprehensive, open, and easy to understand for students. Good knowledge will not only enrich information, but it can also help turn negative perceptions into more positive ones. With the right understanding, young women will be better prepared physically and emotionally to deal with menarche, and be able to see menstruation as a normal and healthy biological process, not something scary or embarrassing.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research related to the perception and level of knowledge about menarche in grade VII and VIII students at SMP Negeri 2 Tomohon, it can be concluded that the majority of female students are 13 years old, and the age of menarche is the most experienced at the age of 11 years, namely 49 respondents (57.0%), The source of information about menarche is most obtained from parents, which is as many as 72 female students (83.7%).

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