

Issue 107 | July 12, 2013 | Focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management, 2nd Edition

This issue updates the August 2012 Weekly on menstrual hygiene management (MHM). It includes an upcoming conference, a toolkit from WaterAid, a review of the health and social effects of MHM, recent newspaper articles and editorials, case studies from Egypt and India and other resources.

We welcome suggestions for Weekly topics. Future issues will focus on innovation, water point mapping, mobile applications, and WASH in schools; more than 100 past issues of the Weekly are [archived](#) on the WASHplus website.

EVENTS

November 21, 2013 - 2nd Annual Virtual Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in WASH in Schools (WinS) Conference. ([Link](#)) | ([Link to 2012 Presentations](#)) |

The 2nd annual virtual MHM conference will provide an opportunity to share MHM lessons learned with the WASH in Schools (WinS) community around the world with a particular focus on the tools and instruments being utilized to explore the MHM barriers facing girls, and to measure and evaluate interventions being trialed or implemented. The one-day meeting will convene in New York City, with a select number of in-person participants, and the vast majority of participants to be online by webex.

GENERAL/OVERVIEW

- **Focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management.** *WASHplus Weekly, Aug 2012.* WASHplus. ([Full text](#))
This issue contains information and links to 2012 conferences, fact sheets and other resources on menstrual hygiene management.
- **Menstrual Hygiene Matters, 2012.** WaterAid. ([Full text](#))
This is an essential resource for improving menstrual hygiene for women and girls in lower and middle-income countries. Nine modules and toolkits cover key aspects of menstrual hygiene in different settings, including communities, schools and

emergencies.

- **A Systematic Review of the Health and Social Effects of Menstrual Hygiene Management.** *PLoS One*. Apr 2013. C Sumpter. ([Full text](#))

The management of menstruation presents significant challenges for women in lower income settings; the effect of poor MHM however remains unclear. It is plausible that MHM can affect the reproductive tract but the specific infections, the strength of effect, and the route of transmission, remain unclear. There is a gap in the evidence for high quality randomized intervention studies that combine hardware and software interventions, in particular for better understanding the nuanced effect improving MHM may have on girls' attendance at school.

JOURNAL ARTICLES/REPORTS

- **Celebrating Womanhood: How Better Menstrual Hygiene Management is the Path to Better Health, Dignity and Business**, 2013. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. ([Full text, pdf](#))

On 8 March 2013, a unique event was hosted in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Celebrating Womanhood: Menstrual Hygiene Management was unique for focussing so clearly on menstruation, but also for the wide and deep range of participants who travelled on International Women's Day to spend several hours discussing what is, even now, a taboo subject in the highest corridors of funding and decision-making. This report provides a snapshot of the key messages and issues raised at the meeting.

- **Fact Sheet on the WSSCC Approach to Menstrual Hygiene Management**, 2013. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council. ([Full text](#))

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) has four pillars of work around Menstrual Hygiene Management: Policy and Research, Advocacy and Communication, Knowledge and Skills, Access and Use.

- **Girls' and Women's Unmet Needs for Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM): The Interactions between MHM and Sanitation Systems in Low-Income Countries.** *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development*, Feb 2013. M Sommer, Columbia University. ([Abstract](#))

While the sanitation sector is gaining increased recognition in policy and research, its inherent inter-linkage with menstrual hygiene management remains an under-researched subject. This review explores knowledge about menstrual beliefs and behaviors, and how women and girls currently handle their monthly menses in relation to existing sanitation systems in low-income countries. It further explores how used menstrual materials are disposed of, and the consequences of different disposal practices for the functioning of sanitation systems.

- **Impact of Health Education Program on Menstrual Beliefs and Practices of Adolescent Egyptian Girls at Secondary Technical Nursing School.** *Life Science*

Journal, 10(2) 2013. R Bassiouny. ([Full text, pdf](#))

The aim of this study was to assess the impact of a health education program on menstrual beliefs and practices among adolescent school girls. It was observed that 41.2% gained their knowledge from their friends. Menstrual practices among them was found to be fair before the program, while in the posttest, there were a significant differences in student's level of knowledge and practices. There was a negative correlation between mothers' education and students' practices. The level of students' knowledge regarding menstruation and menstrual hygiene practices improved after the program.

- **Improving Quality of Life with New Menstrual Hygiene Practices Among Adolescent Tribal Girls in Rural Gujarat, India.** *Reproductive Health Matters*, May 2013. S Shah. ([Abstract](#))

The Government of India has started a new scheme aimed at offering sanitary pads at a subsidized rate to adolescent girls in rural areas. This paper addresses menstrual health and hygiene practices among adolescent girls in a rural, tribal region of South Gujarat, India, and their experiences using old cloths, a new soft cotton cloth (*falalin*) and sanitary pads. The introduction of falalin cloths improved quality of life significantly and to a lesser extent also sanitary pads. No significant reduction was observed in self-reported symptoms of reproductive tract infections. Falalin cloths were culturally more acceptable as they were readily available, easy to use and cheaper than sanitary pads.

- **Reflections on Menstrual Hygiene Management**, 2013. R George. ([Video](#))
A Presentation by Rose George (journalist and author of "The Big Necessity" www.rosegeorge.com) at the "Making connections: Women, sanitation and health" event.

- **ToT in Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in Emergencies for Emergency WASH Trainers: Course Report**, 2013. WaterAid. ([Full text, pdf](#))

In emergency contexts women and girls face additional challenges in managing their menstruation because their usual coping mechanisms may be lost, and they may be faced with living in close proximity with their brothers, fathers, uncles and strangers both male and female. Managing two to seven days of blood being released from the body and washing and drying sanitary materials in this context would be challenging for any woman or girl. In the past few years some progress has been made in relation to MHM in emergencies. In response to increased interest in this topic and the need for training resources, this one day Training of Trainers (ToT) for emergency WASH trainers was created to build confidence in integrating MHM into emergency WASH related training courses.

BLOG POSTS/NEWS ARTICLES/OTHER RESOURCES

- **Menstrual Hygiene Management: A Taboo that Must Be Broken!** *Asian Development Blog*, June 2013. A Jain, ADB. ([Blog post](#))

Urban development projects, including those in water, sanitation and hygiene, provide opportunities to bring this silent but important gender issue into the spotlight by incorporating MHM requirements into the design and management of public latrines and solid waste management initiatives. The cost of incorporating improved MHM practices for women and girls in such projects would be incremental—improved design of latrine facilities for women to give them more space, construction of separate latrines facilities with water supply, placement of trash bins, hygiene awareness and sensitivity training in secondary schools.

- **Menstrual Management & Sanitation Systems: Various Documents on Results from Research Grant**, 2013. V Hoffmann, University of Maryland. ([Link](#))

This entry from the SuSanA online library contains background documents for a project to address the interactions between menstrual management and sanitation, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and led by Vivian Hoffmann at the University of Maryland.

- **Rwanda: Soiling Girls' Education - Are Sanitary Pads Too Expensive?** *New Times*, June 2913. ([Full text](#))

Many girls nationwide miss school when they are in their menstruation period simply because they cannot afford the Rwf500 (US\$.77) that the cheapest sanitary pad costs. Usually a woman will use two packets a month. But girl are now taking matters into their own hands. Girls in one school have initiated a program to ensure that even the poorest girl in school can have sanitary pads.

- **Society for Menstrual Cycle Research.** ([Website](#))

The Society for Menstrual Cycle Research is a nonprofit, interdisciplinary research organization. Membership includes researchers in the social and health sciences, humanities scholars, health care providers, policy makers, health activists, artists and students with interests in the role of the menstrual cycle in women's health and well-being.

- **Women's Healthcare in Africa - An Urgent Monthly Need.** *Huffington Post Blog*, June 2013. B Segal. ([Blog post](#))

As the Kampala-based Director of Operations for Segal Family Foundation, I have the pleasure of witnessing an unexpected movement for women's empowerment that revolves around menstrual management. The Segal Family Foundation is a private foundation founded by Barry Segal in 2004, supporting 130 organizations across 18 African countries. Amongst these partners are three social businesses innovating feminine hygiene products that bring girls dignity, hygienic solutions, and more days in school.

Each WASHplus Weekly highlights topics such as Urban WASH, Indoor Air Pollution, Innovation, Household Water Treatment and Storage, Hand Washing, Integration, and more. If you would like to feature your organization's materials in upcoming issues, please send

them to Dan Campbell, WASHplus knowledge resources specialist, at dacampbell@fhi360.org.



About WASHplus - WASHplus, a five-year project funded through USAID's Bureau for Global Health, creates supportive environments for healthy households and communities by delivering high-impact interventions in water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and indoor air pollution (IAP). WASHplus uses proven, at-scale interventions to reduce diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections, the two top killers of children under five years of age globally. For information, visit www.washplus.org or email: contact@washplus.org.

Please let WASHplus know at any time if you have resources to share for future issues of WASHplus Weekly or if you have suggestions for future topics. An [archive](#) of past Weekly issues is available on the WASHplus website.

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