



Supportive Environments for Healthy Communities

Issue 65 August 3, 2012 | Focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management

This issue updates the October 28, 2011, weekly on Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) with 2012 resources and information. These include a WEDC MHM fact sheet, an update on PATH MHM projects, and recent news items. Country studies from Bangladesh, Iran, Kenya, and others are also referenced.

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.

EDUCATION/CONFERENCES

- **PhD in Menstrual Hygiene Management at WEDC, Loughborough University.**

[\(More information\)](#)

The Water, Engineering and Development Center (WEDC) is exploring the possibility of supporting a student to carry out PhD research related to MHM. In some exceptional cases, funding for international students may be considered under the WEDC scholarship program.

- **Conference on Exploring Menstruation Hygiene Management Practices, September 27, 2012.** [\(Registration information\)](#)

A joint conference between UNICEF and Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health will review the range of MHM approaches being initiated or implemented at the research, program, and policy levels, and share lessons learned to date with the broader WASH in Schools community around the world.

FACT SHEETS/REPORTS

- **Developing an Affordable Sanitary Pad, 2012.** PATH. [\(Link\)](#)

PATH's solution is to develop and advance low-cost menstrual management options for girls and women in low-resource settings. Findings from focus group discussions and literature reviews indicate that girls and women are interested in disposable products that offer better absorbency and have a cheaper price tag than available options. The

paper also discusses reusable options (cloth pads and menstrual cups) that can last for several years.

- **Managing Menstrual Hygiene in Emergency Situations: How Far from Reality?** 2012. D Wickramasinghe. ([Full text, pdf](#))

This paper explores the issue of MHM in emergency situations. It also discusses common obstacles that are encountered in promoting effective and hygienic menstrual practices in disaster relief programs. Learning from the tsunami relief activities in 2004, this article describes strategic actions to build capacity and develop processes to respond to the needs of menstruating women.
- **Menstruation Hygiene Management for Schoolgirls in Low-Income Countries,** 2012. WEDC. ([Full text, pdf](#))

This fact sheet outlines the problems experienced by menstruating schoolgirls in low-income countries. The fact sheet also evaluates simple solutions to these problems including the use of low-cost sanitary pads and suggests ways in which MHM can be included in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs.
- **Menstrual Hygiene Management in Humanitarian Emergencies: Gaps and Recommendations,** *Waterlines*, Jan 2012. M Sommer. ([Abstract](#))

Over the last 15 years there has been increasing attention to adolescent girls' and women's MHM needs in humanitarian response contexts. A growing number of donors, nongovernmental organizations, and governments are calling attention to the importance of addressing girls' and women's MHM-related needs in post-disaster and post-conflict settings.
- **Focus on Menstrual Hygiene Management,** *WASHplus Weekly*, Oct 28, 2012. ([Link](#))

A past issue of the WASHplus Weekly focuses on this neglected topic that has far-reaching implications for health, education, and gender.

COUNTRY STUDIES

- **Bangladesh – Improving Menstrual Hygiene Facilities in Secondary Schools: Initiatives from BRAC-WASH Program,** 2012. B Kabir. IRC. ([Full text, pdf](#))

BRAC-WASH along with financial support from school authorities is constructing separate sanitary latrines for girls with menstrual hygiene facilities in secondary schools. For better management and maintenance of the provided facilities, “student brigades” and school WASH committees are formed in each school. Field experience shows girls are now attending schools with much more confidence and comfort even while menstruating.
- **Iran – Promoting Menstrual Health among Persian Adolescent Girls from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds: A Quasi-Experimental Study,** *BMC Public*

Health, Mar 2012. M Fakhri, University of Medical Sciences, Sari, Iran. ([Full-text](#))
 Research in the past decade has revealed average to poor menstrual health among many Iranian girls. The study investigated the effectiveness of a health promotion project aimed at improving menstrual health among adolescents. The study confirms that educational interventions, such as the health promotion project in this study, can be quite effective in promoting menstrual health.

- **Kenya – INSPIRES: Investigating a Reusable Sanitary Pad Intervention in a Rural Educational Setting**, 2012. E Wilson, University of Sheffield. ([Full text, pdf](#))

This pilot study found promising evidence to suggest an association between menstruation and school absenteeism among Kenyan schoolgirls and found that a reusable sanitary product is potentially an acceptable method of addressing this problem.

- **Malawi – School Menstrual Hygiene Management: More than Toilets**, 2012. SHARE; WaterAid. ([Full-text, pdf](#))

This study answers a call from WaterAid for “evidence from the field” that provides data on MHM for school-age girls in Malawi. In the summer of 2011, the author carried out a pilot study in Malawi around MHM in five secondary schools. The main objectives were: to develop participatory methods of research with a focus group of eight adolescent girls per school; to understand girls’ voiced experiences around managing menstrual issues at secondary school; and to determine girls’ needs.

- **Pakistan – Low Cost Handmade Sanitary Pads! From Design to Production a Step Forward in Menstrual Hygiene Promotion in Pakistan**, 2012. H Isar, IRSP-Pakistan. ([Full-text, pdf](#))

In Pakistan, MHM is a taboo subject at all levels of society. This report describes how a program geared toward low-cost technologies provided menstruating women with previously unavailable sanitation options and paved the way for women’s empowerment by involving them in large scale sanitary pad production.

- **Tanzania – Structural Factors Influencing Menstruating School Girls’ Health and Well-Being in Tanzania**, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, June 2012. M Sommer, Columbia University. ([Abstract](#))

Minimal empirical attention has been given to structural and environmental factors, both physical and social, within the school experience that may impact on pubescent and newly menstruating girls’ school attendance and participation and, ultimately, their health and well-being. This article describes an in-depth study conducted in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, which explored post-pubescent girls’ experiences of managing their menstrual flow in school environments.

IN THE NEWS

- **July 20, 2012 – UN Special Rapporteur Says Lack of Menstrual Hygiene in**

Tuvalu Hampering Girls. ([Link](#))

In certain cases if a family does not have the money to buy sanitary pads, which can cost as much as \$3.60 (U.S.) for a small bag, then girls cannot go to school while they menstruate. This report looks at how this impacts the universal human rights of girls to an education.

- **July 3, 2012 – The “Tampon King” Who Sparked a Period of Change for India’s Women.** ([Link](#))

He was cast out by his fellow villagers, who believed he had gone mad, but now Arunachalam Muruganatham is pioneering a positive change in women’s health.

- **March 1, 2012 - International Women's Day 2012 – Menstrual Hygiene: Breaking the Silence.** ([Link](#))

Belen Torondel is a microbiologist at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She is conducting a systematic review of evidence regarding menstrual hygiene management for SHARE, a consortium researching sanitation and hygiene solutions.

- **Menstrual Hygiene Management in Africa, 2012.** L Moma, WaterAid. ([Video](#))

The presenter touches on myths and cultural taboos, mainly from Africa, surrounding menstruation, adaption methods, the high cost of sanitary materials, and inadequate sanitation facilities as well as how these issues negatively impact girls’ education and development.

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.

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