

Menstrual Shame Supplement

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Introduction

Shame surrounding menstruation can affect most menstrual health outcomes. Menstrual shame can be defined as feelings of humiliation, disgust, or embarrassment around one's own menstruation. These feelings often arise from societal beliefs that menstruation is disgusting or dirty and should be concealed.^{1,2}

In the AMEHC study we hypothesise that shame impacts how girls see themselves and how comfortable they feel in their bodies, which in turn can influence their menstrual health, engagement in activities while menstruating, and their broader mental health, sexual and reproductive health and education..

Reasons to include **menstrual shame** measures in your work:

- To describe the current level of menstrual shame that participants experience
- To explore the relationship between menstrual shame and girls' health and social outcomes including mental health, sexual and reproductive health, and education
- To explore the relationship between menstrual shame and early pregnancy, early sexual debut, and body image

Overview of Menstrual Shame Experiences

Definition	Feelings of humiliation, disgust, or embarrassment around one’s own menstruation arising from society’s beliefs that menstruation is disgusting and should be concealed. ^{1,2}
Importance to Menstrual Health	Shame around menstruation can negatively affect most menstrual health outcomes. Shame can cause distress, worsening mental health outcomes for people who menstruate. ³ Shame can decrease participation in social activities or school if they think their menstrual status could be exposed. ⁴⁻⁶ In past research, young women who feel more ashamed of their menstruation are also more likely to also feel less comfortable with their bodies and engage in more high-risk sexual activities, which could have negative implications for their physical health and sexual and reproductive health. ^{2,7}
Measurement Method	All questions: Self-reported by girls on an enumerator-administered survey
General Considerations	
Question Source	MS1-4: Hunter E. <i>Testing Methods to Measure Menstrual Stigma: Documentation Report to Grand Challenges Canada</i> . University of Sydney; 2020.

Construct’s Main Use in the AMEHC Study			
Proximal Exposure for:	Distal Exposure for:	Covariate for:	Outcome for:
Mental Health Education SRH Social Participation			

Included in the Following AMEHC Study Activities*					
Baseline Girls Survey	Baseline Guardians Survey	Baseline School Audit	Sub-cohort 1 Survey	Sub-cohort 2 Survey	Sub-cohort 3 Survey
X			X	X	X
Wave 1 Survey	Wave 1 School Audit	Wave 2 Survey	Wave 2 Guardian Survey	Wave 2 School Audit	
X		X			

*Specific questions varied over different data collection activities according to study needs.

Menstrual Shame Experiences Survey Questions in AMEHC

Question Number	Question	Response Options
MS1	When I'm menstruating, I feel ashamed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disagree• Somewhat disagree• Somewhat agree• Agree
MS2	When I'm menstruating, I feel unclean or disgusting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disagree• Somewhat disagree• Somewhat agree• Agree
MS3	When I'm menstruating, I feel alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disagree• Somewhat disagree• Somewhat agree• Agree
MS4	I feel bad if I miss school because of my period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disagree• Somewhat disagree• Somewhat agree• Agree

References

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