

The Role of Maternal Support in Developing Attitudes and Managing Anxiety of Adolescent Girls at Menarche: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT

Menarche is the first menstrual period during adolescence, which experiences changes during menarche and experiences anxiety. This research aimed to determine the relationship between maternal support and the attitudes and anxiety of adolescent girls facing menarche in Kalirejo Bangil Village. The design research correlation analysis was done using a cross-sectional approach, with a sample size of 38 teenage girls in grades 4-6 who had menstruated at the Kalirejo Bangil State Elementary School using a proportional random sampling technique. This research instrument uses a questionnaire. The data analysis was univariate and bivariate with the Spearman rank correlation test. The results of the univariate analysis showed that 29 teenage girls (76.3%) had sufficient maternal support, 30 adolescent girls (78.9%) had a good attitude, and 24 teenage girls (63.2%) experienced moderate anxiety in facing menarche. Based on the results of the analysis using the Spearman Rank, it was found that in the variable maternal support and the attitude of adolescent girls, the P-value was 0.342, which means there is no relationship between maternal support and the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche, while in the variable maternal support and adolescent girls' anxiety, the P-value was 0.017, which means there is relationship between maternal support and adolescent girls' anxiety in facing menarche. Maternal support did not directly influence adolescent girls' positive or negative attitudes. However, there is a significant relationship between maternal support and adolescent girls' anxiety levels. The higher the perceived support, the lower the level of anxiety experienced.

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Introduction

Adolescence is a period of change or transition from childhood to adulthood. Puberty is characterized by rapid growth. Puberty is characterized by primary and secondary changes. One of the primary changes in adolescent girls is menarche, the first menstrual period. Adolescents experience physical and psychological changes. Juwita (2019) said that the changes that occur during menarche cause adolescent girls to be embarrassed. Feeling embarrassed and anxious about their condition is one of the psychological changes. During menarche, these feelings get worse if adolescents have not gained sufficient knowledge about menstruation. Information about menstruation and mental readiness is needed before facing menarche to prepare psychologically so that feelings of anxiety and fear can be prevented.

The age of menarche in adolescents can be categorized into fast menarche when experiencing first menstruation at the age of <11 years, normal menarche when it occurs at the age of 11-13 years, and slow menarche when experiencing menarche at the age of >13 years (Marmi, 2013). Data from the

National Health Survey (2018) shows that most girls (31.33%) in Indonesia had their first menstruation at the age of 12 years, as many as 31.30% had their first menstruation at the age of 13 years, and a small proportion (18.24%) had their first menstruation at the age of 14 years. Based on Riskesdas data (2018) in East Java, the proportion of adolescent girls aged 10-19 years who have experienced menstruation is around 73.58% with an average age of menstruation of 12.56 years.

Anxiety is a symptom that often occurs and is very striking in the event of menarche, which is then reinforced by the desire to reject the physiological process (Kartono, 2010). The consequences caused when adolescent girls who are facing menarche experience anxiety will affect the behavior of adolescent girls during menstruation, such as lack of hygiene behavior, lack of knowledge about the physiological process of menstruation and how to use pads during menstruation (Kusmiran, 2012). Various factors cause psychological changes in adolescent girls, including hormonal changes, physical development, peer influence, the process of searching for identity, etc. One of the causes of anxiety is also due to a lack of maternal support (Pramesti et al., 2022). Maternal support can be in the form of emotional support through empathy, appreciation support, instrumental support through direct assistance in the form of objects, and informative support through providing information related to the menstrual process for adolescent girls facing menarche (Nggarang & Jahum, 2019). Providing information about menarche, especially provided by mothers, can be the basis for psychologically preparing adolescents to face their first menstruation (Febri, 2022). Not all mothers provide adequate information, or mothers are reluctant to talk openly about first menstruation (menarche) before adolescents experience menstruation, so it can foster the belief that first menstruation is something unpleasant. In the end, adolescent girls have a negative attitude regarding preparation for menarche (Putri et al., 2021).

Attitudes towards menarche are influenced by several things, including personal and environmental factors. However, not all forms of attitude are influenced by environmental situations and one's personal experience. Adolescents' attitude towards menarche is also an important factor in overcoming anxiety. A positive attitude and acceptance of this change can help adolescents feel more prepared for menarche. Meanwhile, a negative attitude or resistance to change can increase the level of anxiety of adolescent girls in facing menarche. (Muhamad et al., 2020).

The role of mothers in providing information and attention to adolescent girls, especially related to menarche preparation, is expected to make adolescent girls more calm and ready to face menarche. Parental communication with adolescent girls also plays a role in preparing them to face and seek information about menarche (Sari et al., 2022).

Based on the preliminary study conducted at the research site, out of 10 adolescent girls, 5 of them had menstruated and said that they experienced fear and anxiety when they first menstruated. Of the 10 adolescent girls, five adolescent girls who had not yet experienced menarche said that they had not prepared for menstruation, and they felt anxious and afraid when facing menarche. The results of interviews with the 10 adolescent girls showed that anxiety when facing menarche dominated them.

Based on the results of this description, further research was conducted to analyze more deeply the role of maternal support in shaping attitudes and managing adolescent girls' anxiety during menarche.

Method

This study used a descriptive correlational research design with a *Cross-Sectional* approach. It was conducted at the UPT Education Unit at State Elementary School Kalirejo Bangil, and data collection was carried out on May 20-25, 2024.

The population in this study were all adolescent girls in UPT Kalirejo Bangil Elementary School Education Unit, namely students in grades 4, 5, and 6 who had experienced menstruation as many as 42 people. The sample size was determined in this study using a proportional random sampling technique, and 38 adolescent girls were obtained. The data collection method used is primary data by filling out a questionnaire on maternal support, attitudes of adolescent girls, and anxiety about facing menarche.

The instruments in this study used a questionnaire to determine maternal support, an attitude questionnaire to determine the readiness of adolescent girls for menarche, and a questionnaire to determine the anxiety of adolescent girls for menarche, which had been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis in this study used the *Spearman Rank* correlation test with a degree of confidence $\alpha = 0.05$.

This research has received *ethical approval* from the Health Research Ethics Commission of the Poltekkes Kemenkes Malang with number No. DP.04.03/F.XXI.31/0545/2024.

Results

Table 1. Characteristics of Adolescent Girls and Characteristics of Mothers of Adolescent Girls in the UPT Education Unit of SDN Kalirejo Bangil Year 2024

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	%
Age of Menarche of Adolescent Girls	Early Menarche	18	47,4
	Normal Menarche	20	52,6
Last Education of Adolescent Girls's Mother	Elementary School	2	5,3
	Junior High School	2	5,3
	Senior High School	26	68,4
	College	8	21,1
Adolescent Girls's Mother's Occupation	Civil servant	7	18,4
	Employee	9	23,7
	Other Occupation	12	31,6
	Not Employed	10	26,3
Mother's Support for Adolescents in Facing Menarche	Good	5	10,5
	Fair	29	76,3
	Less	4	13,2
Attitudes of Adolescent Girls in Facing Menarche	Good	30	78,9
	Fair	8	12,1
The Anxiety of Adolescent Girls in Facing Menarche	Mild	3	7,9
	Moderate	24	63,2
	Severe	11	28,9
Total		38	100

The descriptive data of the 38 respondents show that most of the adolescent girls (52.6%) experienced the age of menarche in the normal menarche category, namely, aged 11-13 years. Most (68.4%) mothers had the latest education, namely high school, and a small portion (31.6%) of the

mother's occupation was the other job category, namely selling. The complete data can be described as follows.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that most adolescent girls (76.3%) received sufficient maternal support. The questionnaire results show sufficient support for maternal support that provides informational and instrumental support. Most adolescent girls (78.9%) have a good attitude in facing menarche. A good attitude in facing menarche is shown from the results of the questionnaire, the most answers of adolescent girls are about knowledge and readiness in facing menarche. Most of the adolescent girls (63.2%) experienced moderate anxiety. Moderate anxiety from the results of the questionnaire is young women who experience anxiety, fear for no apparent reason when menarche, all body aches when experiencing menarche, and feeling disturbed because of abdominal pain during menarche.

Table 2. Results of Bivariate Analysis of the Relationship between Maternal Support with Adolescent Girls' Attitudes and Anxiety in Facing Menarche at UPT Kalirejo Bangil Elementary School Education Unit in 2024

Variable		Mother's Support for Adolescents in Facing Menarche						Total		p-value	Correlation Coefficient
		Good		Fair		Less					
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%		
Attitudes of Adolescent Girls in Facing Menarche	Good	4	10,5	24	63,3	2	5,2	30	79	0,342	
	Fair	1	2,6	5	13,2	2	5,2	8	21		
	Less	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
The Anxiety of Adolescent Girls in Facing Menarche	Mild	0	0	2	5,3	2	5,3	4	10,6	0,017	-0,385
	Moderate	3	7,9	19	50	9	23,7	29	76,3		
	Severe	2	5,3	1	2,6	0	0	5	13,1		
								38	100		

Table 2 shows that most (63.3%) adolescent girls have a good attitude with sufficient maternal support. Based on the Spearman rank correlation statistical test results, the significance level is 0.342. $p\text{-value} = 0.342$ or > 0.05 , indicating that H_0 is accepted, namely, there is no relationship between maternal support and the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche. Some of the adolescent girls (50.0%) have moderate anxiety with sufficient maternal support. Based on the results of the Spearman rank correlation statistical test, the significance level is 0.017 ($p\text{-value} = 0.017$ or < 0.05), indicating that H_0 is rejected so that there is a relationship between maternal support and anxiety of adolescent girls facing menarche, while the correlation coefficient of 0.385 shows that it has sufficient relationship strength. The negative correlation coefficient indicates that the relationship between the two variables is not unidirectional. This means that the higher the mother's support, the lower the anxiety experienced by adolescent girls.

Discussion

Maternal support can include emotional support, which is support through empathy. The results showed that most of the adolescent girls received sufficient maternal support. Maternal support in the sufficient category from the results of this study is that mothers give praise given by adolescents when facing menarche, mothers provide support in the form of assistance in tangible form and emotional support. The role of parents, especially mothers, is to provide information about child reproduction and

sexual health (Zakaria et al., 2019). Providing information about menarche, especially provided by mothers, can be the basis for psychologically preparing adolescents to face their first menstruation (Febri, 2022).

The results of this study found that very few of the adolescent girls received good maternal support. Good maternal support, in this case, found that adolescent girls get information from their mothers correctly about menarche when adolescents face menarche so that these adolescents understand what menarche means and what to do (Syahdatunnisa et al., 2023). As in the research of Saputro and Ramadhani (2021), adolescents preparing for the arrival of menarche need support.

Based on Kuntjoro (2002) and Shinta et al. (2021), the importance of mothers' support for the psychological readiness of adolescent girls who will face menarche can provide emotional benefits and influence adolescent behavior. The results of this study show that very few of the adolescent girls received less maternal support. Mothers who are less supportive in this study are shown when mothers do not want to explain correctly about menarche when adolescents face menarche.

The results of this study showed that the latest education level of mothers of adolescent girls was mostly high school, and they received sufficient maternal support. Different mothers' final education can affect how they provide and explain menstruation to their daughters. Highly educated mothers find it easier to explain a problem compared to parents with low education, so the information provided is more easily accepted by their daughters.

The results of this study indicate that the employment characteristics of mothers of adolescent girls are mostly other jobs, namely trading with sufficient support. What can cause sufficient support is that parents forget to take the time to provide information about preparing for menarche. This is in accordance with Sintaningsih's research (2019), which states that parents' work will majorly affect socio-economics and a person's mindset so that parents can meet their children's needs financially, information, instrumental, appreciation, and emotionally.

Attitude is a reaction or response still closed from a person to a stimulus or object. The results of this study indicate that most adolescent girls have a good attitude when dealing with menarche. In this case, the good category is adolescents' attitude in facing menarche, shown by their readiness when experiencing menarche. Adolescents consider it a natural thing and must happen to all women, are not afraid, and know what to do when they experience menarche (Arsiati, 2018).

The results of this study on the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche show that most adolescent girls have a good attitude. This means that adolescents can prepare themselves by adding information about menstruation. Fitriana's research (2023) explains that knowledge about menarche is very important for the readiness of adolescent girls to face menarche. The higher the knowledge, the more it will affect the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche.

Based on the results of the frequency distribution of the age characteristics of adolescent girls at SDN Kalirejo Bangil, most of the adolescent girls experienced their first menstruation at the age of 11-13 years. According to Notoatmodjo (2007) at Sintaningsih (2019) age can affect a person's attention span and mindset, the older the age, the more developed the attention span and mindset, so that the

knowledge gained will be good as well as the attitude shown will be more positive. Attitudes can be changed by obtaining additional information. Wrong information from the environment, both from friends, neighbors, family, and especially parents, can also add to the problem it can cause adolescent girls to have a sufficient attitude.

Anxiety facing menarche is a state of emotional atmosphere characterized by physical tension, worry, and the assumption that something bad will happen during menarche (Winarti et al., 2023). Based on the results of this study, it was found that very few of the adolescent girls experienced mild anxiety, mild anxiety in this case, is characterized by the existence of adolescent girls starting to look for information about menarche through books, magazines, or asking people who have experienced menstruation. Most of the adolescent girls experience moderate anxiety, moderate anxiety in this case is characterized by decreased concentration of learning for adolescent girls or the desire to learn but not optimal, irritability, crying, tension, and experiencing fatigue after activities. A small proportion of adolescent girls experience severe anxiety, severe anxiety in this case is that adolescent girls have difficulty sleeping or insomnia, nightmares, do not want to learn effectively or not in accordance with the usual activities, and will experience disorientation.

The results of this study on the anxiety of adolescent girls in facing menarche at the UPT Education Unit of SDN Kalirejo Bangil show that the most significant percentage of adolescent girls experience moderate anxiety. In accordance with the research of Nilawati et al. (2021), anxiety can occur in adolescent girls who first experience menstruation (menarche) due to ignorance and the pain they feel. In addition, adolescence is also a transitional period from childhood to adulthood, so the psychic is also in a stage of development and is relatively unstable.

The results of this study indicate that most adolescent girls experience their first menstruation at the age of 11-13 years. Based on the results of research conducted by Sari et al. (2022) on seventh-grade students of SMP 4 Kudus who became adolescent girls, it shows that they entered at the age of 12 or 13 years, so it can cause anxiety because they first experience menstruation. Menarche can cause psychological changes in adolescent girls, these changes can cause anxiety and feelings of unpreparedness in adolescent girls in facing menarche. Anxiety, as a result of unpreparedness that is not immediately overcome, can lead to excessive and repeated fear of menarche.

The role of mothers is very important in the process of growth and development of children, especially in adolescence. The results of the correlation test in this study found no relationship between maternal support and the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche. This can be seen from the results of the study that most of the attitudes of adolescent girls facing menarche have a good category with sufficient maternal support. This is in accordance with Sintaningsih's research (2019), which explains the absence of a relationship between family support and attitude because there are other factors that influence attitudes, such as peer factors, personal experience, the influence of others who are considered important, mass media and emotional factors.

The influence of the social environment on adolescent development is further reflected in the emotional aspects. The emotional aspects of adolescents are realized through the quality of interpersonal

relationships in the social environment. Emotional support from family and peers becomes a valuable protector that helps adolescents face various challenges, such as stress in facing menarche (Nilawati et al., 2021). Based on the researcher's assumption, the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche can be influenced by mass media and peers. The absence of a relationship between parental support and the attitude of adolescent girls in facing menarche is seen from the positive attitude of adolescents due to a sense of wanting to find out information from mass media and peers. Mass media is very effective for conveying information, especially also for promoting things related to reproductive health, peer groups as a social environment for adolescents have a significant role in the development of their personality. Research by Pramesti et al. (2022) states that one of the factors causing anxiety is maternal support. Mothers have an important role in growth and development, as well as in providing information about child reproduction.

The results of the Spearman rank correlation test obtained a negative correlation coefficient number so that the relationship between the two variables is unidirectional, which means that the higher the maternal support provided, the anxiety of adolescent girls in facing menarche tends to decrease. This is in line with the research of Nilawati et al. (2021), which states that the support provided by mothers to adolescents will affect adolescent anxiety. If the support provided by the mother increases, the anxiety of adolescents in facing menarche will decrease.

The results of the analysis found that there is a relationship between maternal support and anxiety of adolescent girls facing menarche at Kalirejo Bangil State Elementary School, it can be concluded that a person who gets enough support will experience moderate anxiety supported by the results of research showing adolescent girls who experience moderate anxiety with sufficient maternal support. If the mother praises the teenager when facing menarche, the mother provides support in the form of real help and emotional support for her child experiencing menarche, making the teenager more prepared and not feel anxious about facing menarche. When entering puberty, the role of the mother becomes important, it will increase the confidence and peace of life of adolescents. Adolescents who get support will feel less anxious and do not care about the anxiety that is being faced. The more support obtained from mothers of adolescent girls facing menarche, the lower the level of anxiety.

Conclusions

The results showed that most adolescent girls had sufficient maternal support, good attitudes towards menarche, and experienced moderate levels of anxiety. Findings showed that there was no significant relationship between maternal support and adolescent girls' attitudes towards menarche. This implies that maternal support does not directly influence the formation of positive or negative attitudes. A significant negative relationship was found between maternal support and adolescent girls' anxiety levels. Higher levels of maternal support were associated with lower levels of anxiety. These results highlight the importance of maternal support in reducing anxiety among adolescent girls during menarche. Although maternal support may not directly shape attitudes, it plays an important role in reducing emotional distress and promoting a positive transition to adolescence. Future research could

explore the specific aspects of maternal support that are most effective in reducing anxiety, such as emotional support, informational support, or practical support. In addition, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term impact of maternal support on adolescent girls' mental health and well-being.

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