

## **THE ABILITY TO MANAGE LEUCORRHEA IN ADOLESCENTS THROUGH VULVA HYGIENE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Reproductive health is a crucial health issue especially for teenagers who have no experience. Some reproductive health issues that arise include vaginal discharge. We can prevent this through good personal hygiene, especially vulva hygiene. This is an effort made by individuals to maintain personal hygiene. Some teenagers do not do vulva hygiene and the behavior in doing vulva hygiene is still not in accordance with what it should be. They clean the genitalia from back to front. The prevalence of vaginal discharge management in teenagers in the Islamic boarding school environment shows (51.3%) do not do vaginal discharge management properly. Improper vulva hygiene behavior will cause infectious diseases such as candidiasis, bacterial vaginosis, vaginal discharge, cervicitis and dermatitis. The Objective of this research is to determine the ability to manage vaginal discharge or leucorrhea in adolescents. Research design using descriptive with crosssectional approach. The sample was 52 respondents with total sampling technique. Data was taken using questionnaire. Data analysis used descriptive statistics. The vulva hygiene skills of adolescent girls are mostly in the sufficient category, namely 48 respondents (92.3%), and in the inadequate category, namely 4 respondents (7.7%). The ability to manage vaginal discharge in adolescents using vulva hygiene is still not appropriate, therefore it is important to educate adolescents about managing vaginal discharge so that adolescents have the correct knowledge and are able to maintain reproductive health from an early age.

Keywords: ability to manage; leucorrhea; vulva hygiene

### **INTRODUCTION**

Reproductive health is a crucial health issue especially for teenagers who have no experience. It is an important part of overall health, which includes the reproductive organ system and its related functions. One of the problems that women often experience is vaginal discharge, which although most are normal, can be a sign of a health problem if certain changes occur (Hapsari, 2019). Vaginal discharge or in medical terms known as "leukorrhea" is a secretion or fluid that comes out of a woman's vagina. Vaginal discharge can be a clear, white, or slightly yellowish fluid. Normal vaginal discharge usually does not cause itching or an unpleasant odor. Normal vaginal discharge functions to maintain vaginal health and cleanliness, as well as protect the reproductive tract from infection. However, if vaginal discharge is accompanied by changes in color, an unpleasant odor, itching, or pain in the vaginal area, then the vaginal discharge can be a sign of certain health disorders (Afriani, 2023).

Leukorrhea cannot be considered trivial, because the consequences of this vaginal discharge are very fatal if it is not treated quickly not only can it cause infertility and ectopic pregnancy. Vaginal discharge can also be an early symptom of cervical cancer (cervical cancer) which can lead to death if not consulted with a health worker early on. Therefore, it requires proper prevention and management regarding this leucorrhea (Pudiastuti, 2012). We can prevent leukorrhea through good personal hygiene, especially vulva hygiene. Zalni (2018) stated that there are still teenagers who do not perform vulva hygiene properly. Teenagers do not perform vulva hygiene according to the example, they clean the genitals from back to front (Cahyani, Kurniasih, & Komalawati, 2022). This causes digestive tract bacteria to move into the reproductive tract, resulting in reproductive health problems such as leukorrhea and infections in other reproductive organs.

Irwan dan Ridha (2024), the prevalence of vaginal discharge in women in Indonesia reached 75% in 2021, with most experiencing vaginal discharge at least once in their lives. In addition, 45% of women in Indonesia have experienced vaginal discharge more than once. Likewise, according to data from the Indonesian Youth Reproductive Health Survey (SKRRI), women aged 15-24 years experienced 31.8% of vaginal discharge. This figure shows that teenage girls have a higher risk of experiencing vaginal discharge (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). While in Central Java, 45% of teenage girls have experienced vaginal discharge (Wahyuni, 2018). According to BPS Central Java (2018), the prevalence of STIs in Kendal Regency reached 960 people.

Several research results show that the increase in the incidence of vaginal discharge in adolescents is related to the level of knowledge, attitudes and behavior of adolescents in maintaining the cleanliness of the female genital area through vulva hygiene. The results of the study by Kesuma and Putra (2023) found that there was a significant relationship between knowledge and behavior with the incidence of vaginal discharge in adolescents. Arsyad, Safitri, Zulfamidah, Yuniati and Sadiqah (2023) also found a significant relationship between vaginal hygiene behavior and the occurrence of pathological vaginal discharge. The same thing was stated by Irwan and Ridha (2024) who stated that there was a very strong relationship between the knowledge of adolescent girls about vulva hygiene and the incidence of vaginal discharge in adolescents with a Spearman rank correlation coefficient of 0.868.

Several efforts can be made to improve the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of adolescents regarding how to care for reproductive organs, prevention and management of vaginal discharge, namely by providing health education through demonstrations, lectures, discussions, role plays, symposiums and seminars (Notoatmodjo, 2012; Ariyanti, Sariyani dan Utami, 2019; Pakpahan et al., 2021; Ministry of Health, 2022). Thus, teenagers are able to prevent and manage leukorrhea properly and correctly. The purpose of this study is to determine the ability of teenagers in managing leucorrhoea through vulva hygiene.

## **METHOD**

This study is a descriptive study with a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study were 52 female adolescents with a total sample sampling technique. Data collection used a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. Univariate analysis used descriptive statistics which aimed to explain or describe the characteristics of each research variable (Nursalam, 2016). The results of the analysis are presented in the form of numbers and percentages.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study on the characteristics of respondents showed that the average age of respondents was 16.55 with the youngest age being 14 years and the oldest age being 18 years. The results showed that almost all respondents had the ability to perform vulva hygiene in the sufficient category, namely 48 respondents (92.3%). In details can be seen in the table below.

Table 1.  
Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Age (n = 52)

Variabel	Mean	Median	Standar Deviasi	Min	Max	95%	
						Lower	Upper
Age	16.27	16.00	0.992	14	18	15.99	16.55

Table 2.  
Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on The ability to manage Leukorrhea through Vulva Hygiene (n= 52)

Vulva Hygiene Ability	f	%
Good	0	0
Cukup	48	92,3
Kurang	4	7,7
Total	52	100

Age 16.5 years is included in the middle adolescent category (14-17 years). During this middle adolescence, adolescents begin to be interested in romantic relationships. They also have the possibility to question and explore sexual identity (Hapsari, 2019). In addition, adolescents' mindsets are based on logic, but are often driven by their feelings or emotions. Adolescents have been able to think rationally and consider the big picture (Al-Faruq and Sukatin, 2021; Kemkes, 2019). In addition, as a person gets older, their memory, comprehension, mindset and knowledge will also increase, which will affect a person's behavior (Notoatmojo, 2014; Ajhuri, 2019; Afriani, 2023).

The results of this study on characteristics by age are in line with Irwan and Ridha's research, where the research respondents were in the middle adolescent category, namely in the age range of 14-16. At this time, adolescents are developing new ways of thinking to make their own decisions and are vulnerable to being exposed to trends. This greatly influences adolescent girls in their behavior, especially regarding genital hygiene in preventing and treating vaginal discharge. The results of the study showed that almost all respondents had the ability to manage vaginal discharge with vulva hygiene in the sufficient category, namely 48 respondents (92.3%). The results of this study are in line with Rina (2018) who found that the majority of respondents, namely 51.3%, did not manage and prevent vaginal discharge properly. The same thing was stated by Palang (2019) that the majority of respondents had sufficient vulva hygiene behavior, namely 64.3%.

Vaginal discharge or leukorrhea is one of the reproductive health problems that often occurs in women, including adolescent girls. Vaginal discharge is said to be still within normal limits if it is clear or transparent, odorless, does not itch and the amount is not excessive. However, if the fluid changes to a yellowish color, smells and is accompanied by itching, it is included in the category of abnormal or pathological vaginal discharge that must be followed up immediately (Kusmiran, 2011; Marwang and Passe, 2024). One of the efforts that can be done in the management of vaginal discharge in adolescents is optimizing personal hygiene behavior, especially in maintaining the cleanliness of the genital organs through vulva hygiene (Sari, 2024). Proper vulva hygiene is very important in managing and preventing vaginal discharge, especially those caused by infection or imbalance of vaginal microflora. Maintaining proper vulva hygiene can help prevent infection and irritation that can worsen vaginal discharge and overcome vaginal discharge (Pudiastuti, 2012).

A person's ability to manage vaginal discharge by maintaining vulvar cleanliness or vulvar hygiene includes physical, psychological, social aspects, and individual knowledge about the importance of cleanliness and care of reproductive organs. According to Afriani (2023), the ability of adolescents to manage vaginal discharge is influenced by several factors, including knowledge, attitudes and actions to prevent and manage vaginal discharge and exposure to information about vaginal discharge. In this study, some adolescents have the ability to manage vaginal discharge through vulva hygiene in the sufficient category, this is because most adolescents are still in the middle adolescent age range, lack of knowledge and exposure to information about vaginal discharge and vulva hygiene so that it affects the ability of adolescents in managing vaginal discharge through vulva hygiene.

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study on the characteristics of respondents showed that the average age of respondents was 16.55 with the youngest age being 14 years and the oldest age being 18 years. The results showed that almost all respondents had the ability to perform vulva hygiene in the sufficient category, namely 48 respondents (92.3%). Therefore, it is very important to conduct continuous health education related to adolescent reproductive health, adolescent reproductive health problems: leukorrhea, prevention and management with vulva hygiene. The government is expected to further optimize the function of the Health Center in providing Reproductive Health Services to Adolescents through promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative efforts.

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