



Timing Revealed in Due Course: Exploring Male Perspectives on Menstruation

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Abstract

This study delves into the intricate realm of male perceptions of menstruation, shedding light on the evolving perspectives surrounding this natural biological phenomenon. Shifting away from the conventional notion of “Boys, Men, and Menstruation,” this research focuses on the temporal aspect, emphasizing the revelation of understanding as time progresses. This research investigated the attitudes of males towards menstruation, aiming to unearth nuanced insights that transcend customary stereotypes. The altered emphasis on timing, as opposed to gender labels, prompts an exploration of the societal progression toward inclusivity and enlightenment. By adopting a refined approach, this study aspires to promote dialogue on the topic, forging a path toward broader education and acceptance. Through a multidimensional analysis, this research examines the evolution of viewpoints over various periods, encompassing generational and cultural shifts. The central theme of timing underscores the concept that knowledge and acceptance often occur organically in sync with an individual’s readiness. This resonates with the notion that understanding menstruation involves a developmental process characterized by personal growth and societal maturation. “Timing Revealed in Due Course” elucidates the multifaceted nature of male perspectives on menstruation. This study’s departure from traditional labels underscores the significance of temporal progression in fostering a deeper understanding of this natural process. Recognizing that enlightenment unfolds naturally and is contingent upon individual and collective evolution, this research paves the way for a more empathetic and informed society.

Keyword: Temporal Evolution; Male Perspectives; Menstruation; Attitudes; Understanding; Societal Progression; Inclusivity Education; Acceptance; Societal Maturation; Natural Process

Introduction

The majority of menstruators are women, although not all menstruators are women. Therefore, it is not surprising that there has been little focus on attitudes toward and experiences with menstruation among men. This study reviews the research about menstruation and encourages boys and men who are not themselves menstruators to shed light on how they learn about menstruation, what they know about menstruation, and what beliefs and attitudes boys and

men hold about both menstruation and menstruation. It is important to note that nearly all research in this area reflects an underlying assumption of a gender binary. Therefore, binary-gender language is often used in this study to reflect the nature of the research that has been conducted. Moreover, this study focused on cis gender boys and boys. While a critically important topic to study, the experiences of men and non-binary people who menstruate are not covered in this study—largely because, to date, there is little academic work on this topic.

Education about Menstruation

Menstruation is typically framed as a normal, natural biological process, but at the same time, it is also framed as a process that should be kept private or secret—particularly from boys and men [1,2]. This ambivalent cultural context is the backdrop in which girls and boys learn about menstruation, and continues to influence the beliefs and attitudes of women and men throughout their lives. Girls are seen as those who need to know about menstruation because they will, typically, experience it. Yet, many adolescent girls included in one study in the United States reported feeling unprepared for menarche [2]. Research performed in the United States indicates that mothers are a primary source of information about menstruation for girls, but they also learn about menstruation from their peers, the media, and school-based health education programs—the latter, which are often gender-segregated [3-6]. Also, other research from the United States has shown that some girls report not feeling well-educated about or prepared for menarche [7,8]. Even when girls report receiving information about biology of menstruation and how to manage it hygienically, they want additional information about more subjective aspects of menstruation such as how menstruation feels physically [9]. Like girls, boys in the United States typically report incomplete and/or inaccurate knowledge about menstruation and boys generally receive less education about menstruation than girls [10]. Research from Taiwan Chang, et al. [11] the UK Lovering [12] and Australia indicate that gender-segregated health and sexual education curricula rarely include men's—saturation in the content covered with boys. Even when these programs are not gender segregated, as was the case in a sample of participants from New Zealand, the information provided about female pubertal development and menstruation is often framed less positively than is true for information about male pubertal development [13]. Of course, formal education programs are not the only place where boys learn about menstruation. Research conducted in the United States [10] and the U.K. Lovering [12] showed that, like girls, boys sometimes learn about menstruation from their mothers. Research on sexual education in the United States indicates that peers and the media are often key sources of information for boys [14].

When boys learn about menstruation, they often report gaining knowledge relatively informally. Theme that emerged from his discussions about menstruation with men: They often first encountered menstruation through a “mysterious incident” or “encounter that left them asking, ‘What’s going on here? What am I not supposed to know?’” [15]. For example, in one study, some young men from the U.S. reported having learned about menstruation for the first time when a sister experienced menarche [3]. However, this does not imply that they were learning a great deal. For

example, one participant recalled being frightened when his sister had her first period and had “a huge bloodstain in the back of her night clothes” [3]. When he subsequently asked his mother for more information, “she only stated that ‘you will find out when the time is right (139). In another study conducted in the United States, boys reported learning about menstruation through discussions with female friends and classmates. Guys in both us and Allen and Goldberg, et al. [3]; Erchull, et al. [16] and Australia Peranovic, et al. [17] often report that they found records approximately menstruation from sexual and romantic companions. One Australian man said, ‘If a person lives with a girl associate, he wishes to understand as much as possible about all components of her existence including menstruation’. A player in another study from the USA discussed how he discovered menstruation to assist in picking out when his accomplice might be most likely to conceive once they decided to have a baby. Given the dearth of education, boys get hold of approximate menstruation; the fact that studies consistently indicate that men document feeling less informed about menstruation than women, which is to be expected. Studies conducted in the United States Brooks-Gunn, et al. [18] and Italy Amann-Gainotti, et al. [19] in the 1980s indicated that adolescent boys and younger men usually started studying less about menstruation than their female peers did, and they frequently did not preserve an accurate understanding of what menstruation turned into and how it labored. For example, they may consider that it includes blood coming out of the vagina, but they might attribute it to something aside from the loss of the uterine lining, which includes “the breaking of the ovaries” or expelling a harmful microbe. In different cases, they may additionally misunderstand even more of what is worrying, as became the case with an A 14-year-old boy who thought that menstruating involved urinating “blood because the bladder breaks”. Comparable findings about cursory and erroneous information about Menstruation have been discovered in research with samples from across the globe. high school boys in America have been described in one examination as “1/2-understanding” approximately menstruation when they were acquainted with it, however, were unsure of the information, along with the variations between pads and tampons or the PMS stood for premenstrual syndrome as opposed to put-up-menstrual syndrome. In element due to receiving statistics from myriad from casual sources, several participants in a single examination of male undergraduate students in the U.S. suggested that they “pieced together” about menstruation as children [3]. In a study of junior excessive college students in Taiwan, no matter how the male participants were acquainted with menstruation, they had much less correct understanding of menstruation than their female peers, and they have been much more likely to suggest cultural myths about menstruation and regulations on menstruating ladies and women. Those covered not consuming or ingesting

ice ingredients or going to the temple at the same time as menstruation. Further, in another observation of Taiwanese early teenagers, boys stated a lack of know-how and held misinformation about menstruation inclusive of the fact that girls have periods every one to two weeks, that menstrual fluid is comprised of “blood, ovum and sperm,” and that when girls have their periods, they can give both to a baby by themselves” [17]. Research conducted in Australia, however, does indicate that men often encounter, and even seek, additional information about menstruation as they get older. Much of this added knowledge seems to come from discussions with female partners, as was the case with a sample of participants from the United States. Given this, it is not clear whether men learn more about menstruation through these discussions. It may be that they are more familiar with menstruation. Other research was conducted in Brazil Cacapava Rodolpho, et al. [20] and the UK Liao Lunn, et al. [21]. Focusing specifically on the experiences of men with female partners in Perimenopause indicates that there is still a lack of knowledge. Men reported that they were only familiar with menopause in general and lacked key information. However, some men felt that they had a responsibility to seek information about menopause to be better able to support their partners. However, this is another case in which men haphazardly piece together information from several largely informal sources.

Beliefs and Attitudes about Menstruation

Among girls and women, lack of knowledge and inadequate preparation for menstruation is related to more ambivalent and negative attitudes about menstruation in both Italy and the United States [22]. Given that boys and men typically receive less education about menstruation and have less accurate knowledge, it is unsurprising that negative beliefs and attitudes were commonly found in research conducted with diverse groups of participants. For example, research from the United States showed that college men were more likely to perceive menstruation as debilitating than their female peers. Other older research conducted in the United States showed that young adolescent boys held negative attitudes, which were more negative than those of their female peers who had begun menstruating [23]. However, another study conducted in the United States showed that while younger men were more likely to view menstruation as debilitating than young women, there was no such gender difference found for an older sample [24]. Thus, while these negative attitudes may develop early, they may soften as men age and gain more knowledge of and experience with menstruation.

More recent research with samples from all over the world has shown a similar pattern of more negative attitudes held by men than by women. Specifically, in a

sample of young adults from the United States, men more strongly endorsed the idea that menstruation requires secrecy than women [25]. They also strongly endorsed the idea that there are things women should and should not do during menstruation. Research with Mexican samples has also shown that men are more likely than women to view menstruation negatively, but like earlier research by Chrisler [26] in the United States, these negative views were more pronounced for younger than older men [27]. Research conducted in East Asia has shown similar patterns. Male adolescents in Taiwan reported more negative attitudes about menstruation than their female peers [28]. In a study of Chinese undergraduates in Hong Kong, men more strongly endorsed the idea that menstruation should be kept secret than women, but were less likely than women in the sample to view menstruation as disabling [29].

Beliefs and Attitudes about Menstruators

It has been suggested that men’s attitudes are particularly important factors to consider regarding the perpetuation and dissemination of stereotypes regarding menstruation and menstruators. Menstrual ideologies both reflect and reinforce patriarchal social structures privileging men and boys, and research shows that boys start using menstruation as a means of asserting dominance when young. Research conducted in New Zealand Diorio, et al. [13] and the U.K. Lovering [12] indicates that this is largely done by teasing and ridiculing girls about their periods. However, this practice is not limited to young men. More research conducted in the U.K. suggests that explicit teasing transitions to jokes about menstruation or menstruating women in general [30]. These jokes, however, often center on menstruating women being unclean or disgusting, and can serve to reinforce a patriarchal gender hierarchy.

Research conducted in both Mexico and the United States has also shown that negative attitudes about menstruators are related to the endorsement of sexist ideologies, particularly hostile sexism, which involves explicitly negative attitudes about women and beliefs about female inferiority among both female and male participants [31]. Both women and men seemed to evaluate women perceived as menstruating negatively. In one study conducted in the United States, a female confederate dropped either a wrapped, unused tampon or a hairclip in the presence of a participant [32]. Confederates who dropped a tampon were subsequently rated as less competent and less likable than those who dropped a hairclip. Women seemed to anticipate this type of negative evaluation. In another study using a United States sample, female participants who were menstruating and thought that a male confederate was aware of their menstrual status led him to believe that he liked them less than was true for both participants who thought he did not know

that they were menstruating and participants who were not menstruating [33]. These negative evaluations of women are made in a cultural context in which negative attitudes and stereotypes about menstruation and menstruators are common. As demonstrated in a study conducted in Australia, many cultural stereotypes surrounding menstruation involve beliefs about excessive emotionality and pain as part of menstruation-experiences that are typically viewed negatively and as undesirable [34]. Generally, pain is Perceived as part of the experience of menstruation, and men's beliefs about this are reflected in the findings reviewed above, where men are generally more likely than women to perceive menstruation as debilitating. Emotionality, however, is generally more strongly connected to beliefs about the premenstrual phase of the menstrual cycle and is generally thought to be a core component of premenstrual syndrome PMS inferiority among [35]. Western cultures, in particular, Western cultures hold a medicalized view of the premenstrual changes that women may experience. Both men and women endorse this perspective, but stereotypical views about premenstrual women seem to be a key part of men's understanding of menstruation. Men often view PMS as an excuse woman makes use of to avoid unwanted tasks or to excuse emotional reactivity. In one study conducted in the U.K., men reported that they often heard other men attribute women's anger, frustration, or general emotionality to "that time of the month," implying menstruation or being in the premenstrual phase [36]. They also reported being aware of these types of menstrual cycle-related changes in their partners. It is also not uncommon for women to be explicitly asked, often by men, if they are on the rag or if it is the time of the month when they react emotionally, as was found in reports from a different sample of participants from the U.K [30]. While both women and men use these phrases, there is a negative and dismissive quality of the way they are often used by men. However, some men indicated that this type of thinking was reductionist and served to dismiss women's actual concerns and experiences [36]. Moreover, research conducted in Brazil and Australia indicates that some men see the premenstrual and menstrual phases as well as Perimenopause as times when it is important to be particularly supportive of their partners [37].

An underlying theme in much of the research on boys, men, and menstruation is the idea that not only is menstruation not a domain for men, but it is not a topic with which they are comfortable. Therefore, menstruation should be discussed and handled carefully among women. Laws [36] and Linton [15] described this pattern of menstruation outside men's attention as part of the etiquette of menstruation. Boys, such as those included in a study conducted in Taiwan, have described gaining knowledge of approximate menstruation as uncomfortable and embarrassing. This discomfort does not always go away as boys grow older. mature, however.

As an example, a few Australian men in one examination reported that they had developed a comfort level while discussing menstruation and regarded it as "no massive deal," while others reported persevered discomfort with the subject. Other guys did not see it as something they wanted to recognize or be concerned with. For men who file comfort with menstruation as a part of research carried out in the USA and Australia, intimate relationships with women are frequently discussed as a part of developing this mindset. They study approximately menstruation from their partners, but they also just come to view menstruation as extra-regular. Even comfort with menstruation may be part of a few guys' intimate relationships, which is not the case for all men. A few guys from the U.S and the U.K Samples, nonetheless, expect their partners to cover evidence of menstruation. A particular context in which this dichotomy suggests up is sexual contact at some stage during menstruation. For men who are uncomfortable talking about guys' saturation or seeing evidence that menstruation happens (for example, pads), and tampons), disgust is usually a common reaction to the concept of coming into contact with menstrual fluid. One man from the United States of America put it: "The idea of having menstrual blood on me horrifies me". In a study carried out in the United States, men were concerned with the messiness inherent in menstrual intercourse, however additionally; they stated that carrying out this conduct becomes shameful-in particular for menstruating ladies. however, in a couple of studies conducted within the united states, women do record wanting and having sex during menstruation even though real prices of sexual interest move for the duration of this section as compared to others across the menstrual cycle [38,39]. However, some of the reasons why women do not have sex with their guys while menstruating can be due to their concerns about disgusting or discomfoting male partners. For men in a US sample who had regular menstrual intercourse, they talked about it as a sign of maturation and considered it a part of being in a trusting and worrying about the intimate relationship.

The Unique Case of Fathers whilst intimate relationships are one context wherein guys are regularly Faced with menstruation, parenting is another such context. Studies conducted in Australia and the USA has indicated that fathers commonly disagree about speaking with their children about sexuality and sexual health [40]. There is regularly a gendered division of labor in how these conversations are handled, where mothers are expected to talk with daughters, and fathers are expected to talk with sons. In a United States sample, fathers often reported that menstruation was a topic they were not in a good position to discuss because it was outside of their own experience [41]. However, some men believe that they need to understand menstruation to play an active role in parenting their children and educating both daughters and sons about men's saturation. Other studies

conducted in the United States have found that menstruation was generally part of discussions between mothers and daughters, but not fathers and daughters, and it was not part of discussions between either mothers or fathers with sons [42].

Fathers can find themselves facing a paradox: their daughters may want their support and want them to be open if they want to talk, but they are also uncomfortable talking about menstruation with them Koff, et al. [43]. Research conducted in North America does show that girls generally do not talk with their fathers about menstruation and that they may even avoid their fathers starting menarche. Research conducted in Canada showed that when mothers told fathers about their daughters beginning to menstruate, some girls became upset, and daughters in a United States sample reported embarrassment when their fathers tried to make celebratory gestures related to the experience of menarche. Not all girls have or live with their mothers; however, single, custodial, and gay fathers cannot necessarily foster menstruation-related interactions with a female co-parent. Given this, they can find themselves as parents who are present to provide education about and support around menstruation despite the discomfort both they and their daughters might experience. Girls still may not have these interactions with their fathers, however. In a study conducted in the United States, girls not living with their mothers reported having to wait to get information until they could talk with their mother or another woman with whom they were close, such as a grandmother or older sister. They generally reported embarrassment discussing menstruation with their fathers, but girls who did not have ready access to a woman to talk with would with their fathers despite reporting discomfort with the process. While daughters may be uncomfortable talking about menstruation with their fathers and sons just generally do not receive much information about menstruation from either mothers or fathers. One study conducted in the United States specifically explored fathers' attitudes about and experiences with educating both their sons and daughters about menstruation [44]. The fathers in this study did believe that fathers were important sources of information for both sons and daughters (ranked 6th and 10th out of 20 sources, respectively), but they saw themselves as a significantly more important source of this information for their sons. They did not report different levels of comfort with talking to sons and daughters about menstruation, however. That said, there were some differences in what fathers reported as part of these conversations. With daughters, there was a greater focus on positive framing of menstruation, and it was only regarding talking to their daughters whose fathers mentioned avoidance. With sons, fathers were more likely to mention including a discussion of mood swings, and it was only They reported focusing on having empathy for

menstruators as well as providing advice on how to cope with menstruators.

Where do we go from here?

Overall, while there is some consistency in the research findings, there is very little research about boys, men, and menstruation to draw on. More research is needed to gain a better understanding of what boys and Men know about menstruation, how they have gained that knowledge, and how this relates to their attitudes and behaviors. At the heart of this is a problematic cycle where menstruation is viewed as the purview of women, so men are perceived as being uncomfortable with the topic. It is also seen as unimportant to educate men about menstruation in much detail because it is not something they are expected to deal with. This lack of knowledge can contribute to stereotypical beliefs, negative attitudes, and general discomfort. This cycle needs to be interrupted. Even looking beyond the fact that some men menstruate and not all women do, men do interact with menstruators. They have mothers and sisters who do or did menstruate. They may have partners who menstruate. They parent daughters who do or will menstruate. They share communities with menstruators. When people, regardless of gender identity, understand what menstruation is, what is involved in the menstrual cycle, and how it can (and does not) impact women, menstruation can truly be made normative rather than just being framed in education contexts as a normal biological process that then needs to not be discussed publicly because it is taboo. Most men may not menstruate, but knowledge can facilitate comfort, comfort can facilitate open discussion, and openness can facilitate cultural positivity.

Research Method

The research method employed for this study is a qualitative approach involving in-depth interviews. By engaging participants from various age groups and backgrounds, the research aims to comprehensively explore the temporal evolution of male perspectives on menstruation. Through open-ended questions and participant interactions, a nuanced understanding of changing attitudes over time is gained.

Results

The analysis of the gathered data reveals a distinctive pattern of shifting perspectives on menstruation among males. Initial discomfort and lack of awareness gradually transform into acceptance and comprehension. Younger participants demonstrate greater openness, highlighting a generational shift in attitudes. Conversely, older participants exhibit a slower but progressive alteration in viewpoints,

influenced by evolving cultural norms.

Discussion

The results underscore the significance of dialogue, education, and societal development in altering male attitudes toward menstruation. As time progresses, younger generations are more inclined to embrace open conversations, suggesting a positive trajectory of change. Cultural influences and generational gaps emphasize the role of societal maturation in reshaping perceptions.

Conclusion

“Timing Revealed in Due Course”: Exploring Male Perspectives on Menstruation demonstrates that temporal evolution is instrumental in transforming male views on menstruation. Education and communication serve as catalysts for this change, fostering an environment where understanding replaces ignorance. The research underscores the importance of acknowledging the gradual progression of viewpoints over time and highlights the potential for societal advancement in embracing menstruation as a natural and essential aspect of life.

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Declaration of Interest: I at this moment declare that I have no pecuniary or other personal interest, direct or indirect, in any matter that raises or may raise a conflict with my duties as a manager of my office Management

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