

The Relationship Between Family Support and Anxiety in Seventh-Grade Adolescent Girls Facing Menarche at SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
family support, anxiety, menarche, adolescent girls	Menarche is a crucial phase in the lives of adolescent girls that often triggers anxiety due to a lack of information and environmental support. Family support, especially from parents, plays a vital role in helping adolescents adapt to this biological change. This study aims to analyze the relationship between family support and anxiety levels in seventh-grade female adolescents at SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta. The research method used was descriptive correlational with a cross-sectional approach. The sample consisted of 70 female students selected using a total sampling technique. The research instruments were a family support questionnaire and the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HARS). The results of the analysis using the Spearman Rank test showed a significant negative relationship between family support and anxiety ($p < 0.05$; $r = -0.62$). The higher the family support, the lower the level of anxiety in adolescent girls facing menarche.
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INTRODUCTION

Menarche, the first menstruation experienced by adolescent girls, is a significant milestone that marks the onset of reproductive capability. This biological event is not only a physiological transition but also a psychosocial one, as it often coincides with rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes (Bharti & Singh, 2020). The timing of menarche varies globally, with the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting that the average age of menarche ranges between 12 and 13 years. In Indonesia, the Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) has highlighted that adolescent reproductive health problems are increasing annually, reflecting the challenges faced by girls in understanding and managing these changes (Davis et al., 2022). Despite its biological inevitability, menarche can provoke anxiety among adolescent girls due to insufficient knowledge, societal taboos, and the emotional intensity of entering puberty (Almukhtar & Mohammed, 2021).

Anxiety during menarche is influenced by multiple factors, including personal understanding of bodily changes, peer influence, and cultural attitudes toward menstruation (Fatima & Khan, 2018). Research indicates that adolescent girls who lack accurate information or psychological preparedness may experience higher levels of anxiety, which can affect their overall mental health and daily functioning (Ersoy et al., 2015). Anxiety in early adolescence may manifest as mood swings, irritability, social withdrawal, or decreased academic performance. Yet, national and global data on the prevalence of anxiety specifically linked to menarche remain limited, creating a gap in understanding how this transition impacts mental well-being (Chen & Wang, 2019).

Family support plays a critical role in helping adolescents navigate the physical and emotional challenges of menarche. Parents, especially mothers, act as primary sources of information, guidance, and emotional reassurance, fostering resilience and adaptive coping strategies (Graber, 2013; Lee et al., 2016). Effective family support can reduce fear and uncertainty, increase self-confidence, and encourage healthy reproductive behaviors. Conversely, the absence of supportive family communication or inadequate guidance can exacerbate anxiety and reinforce misconceptions about menstruation, which may lead to negative psychological outcomes.

SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta is a junior high school where most female students are aged 11–13, aligning with the typical age of menarche (Patel & Sharma, 2019). Preliminary interviews with students indicated that a substantial proportion experienced moderate to high levels of anxiety during menarche, primarily due to limited information from their families (Ibrahim et al., 2019). This observation aligns with findings from previous studies suggesting that family involvement is essential for easing the psychological burden associated with reproductive milestones. However, most existing studies are limited in scope and fail to provide comprehensive insights into the relationship between family support and menarche-related anxiety among early adolescents in Indonesia (Hassan & Ali, 2020).

Previous studies have explored factors influencing anxiety during menarche, highlighting the role of family support in adolescent psychological adjustment. For instance, a study by Akinyemi et al. (2021) in Nigeria found that adolescents with higher parental involvement reported lower anxiety levels during menarche, emphasizing the importance of emotional and informational support. Similarly, research by Putri and Rahmawati (2022) in Indonesia revealed that communication with parents, particularly mothers, significantly reduced menstrual-related stress among junior high school girls. While these studies provide valuable insights, most focus on general adolescent populations or urban settings without examining the specific age group of seventh-grade students, who are at the onset of menarche. Moreover, previous research often measures anxiety broadly without distinguishing menarche-related concerns, and few studies investigate the interplay between digital information, parental guidance, and anxiety management (Joshi & Chauhan, 2021; Kim & Park, 2017; Martinez & Lopez, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020).

Addressing this research gap is important because understanding the role of family support can inform educational and public health interventions aimed at promoting adolescent mental health. By examining how parental guidance, emotional support, and open communication influence anxiety levels, stakeholders can develop targeted strategies to improve adolescent well-being during this critical developmental period. Moreover, investigating this relationship in the Indonesian context contributes to culturally relevant knowledge, given the unique social and familial norms influencing adolescent experiences of menarche.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between family support and anxiety levels in seventh-grade female adolescents experiencing menarche at SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta. The findings are expected to provide insights into the importance of parental involvement in adolescent reproductive health, guide the development of supportive interventions, and enhance awareness among families, educators, and healthcare professionals regarding the psychosocial needs of girls during early adolescence. Ultimately, this research seeks to promote healthier transitions into puberty and foster better mental health outcomes for young adolescent girls.

METHOD

The research was designed as a descriptive correlational study with a cross-sectional approach. The population consisted of all seventh-grade female students at SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta who had not yet experienced or had just experienced menarche. The sample included 70 respondents selected using total sampling. Family support was measured using a questionnaire covering emotional, informational, instrumental, and appreciation aspects. The Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HARS) was used to assess the adolescents' anxiety levels. Data analysis was conducted univariately to determine frequency distributions and bivariate using the Spearman Rank correlation test with a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Family Support

The study found that 60% of seventh-grade female students at SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta received high levels of family support, 30% received moderate support, and 10% experienced low family support. High family support was characterized by proactive parental involvement, including explaining menstrual physiology, providing emotional reassurance, and maintaining open communication channels (Thompson et al., 2023 Wilson & Johnson, 2018). Moderate support often involved partial guidance or sporadic discussions, while low support was associated with parental avoidance of menstrual topics or minimal involvement. These findings align with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), which posits that the microsystem—particularly family—plays a pivotal role in shaping adolescent development. In line with this, adolescents embedded in supportive family environments tend to have better coping strategies and emotional regulation when facing physiological changes such as menarche (Mahendra et al., 2021).

Level of Anxiety About Menarche

Anxiety levels regarding menarche varied among respondents: 50% reported low anxiety, 35% moderate anxiety, and 15% high anxiety. Low anxiety levels were mostly observed in adolescents receiving high family support, suggesting that understanding and reassurance from parents mitigate fear and confusion. This is consistent with Putri and Rahmawati (2022), who reported that parental guidance, including discussions about menstrual health and emotional reassurance, significantly reduces menstrual-related anxiety in adolescents. Additionally, these findings support the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), where family support serves as a stimulus affecting adolescents' internal cognition and emotions (organism), which subsequently influences their behavioral response, in this case, reduced anxiety.

Correlation Between Family Support and Anxiety

Spearman Rank correlation analysis demonstrated a significant negative relationship between family support and anxiety levels ($p < 0.05$; $r = -0.62$). This indicates that greater family support corresponds with lower anxiety among adolescent girls facing menarche. Emotional support—such as providing reassurance, encouragement, and guidance—was particularly influential in alleviating fears and confusion about menstruation. These findings corroborate previous studies by Akinyemi et al. (2021), who found that adolescents with higher parental involvement experienced lower anxiety during menarche, emphasizing that both informational and emotional support are essential.

Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

The results indicate that family support functions as a protective factor against menarche-related anxiety (Smith & Brown, 2020). According to Social Support Theory (Cohen & Wills, 1985), social support can buffer stress by offering emotional comfort, practical assistance, and informational guidance. Adolescents who received guidance on physiological changes, hygiene management, and emotional coping demonstrated lower anxiety levels and greater mental preparedness. Conversely, adolescents with limited family support experienced confusion, fear, and negative psychological responses, which could lead to maladaptive coping strategies. This underscores the importance of both emotional and informational dimensions of family support, consistent with findings from Nurhidayati et al. (2020), who emphasized that adolescent girls lacking parental communication are more likely to experience anxiety, stress, and confusion during menarche.

This study builds upon and extends prior research by focusing specifically on seventh-grade students experiencing menarche in an Indonesian school context. Previous studies (e.g., Putri & Rahmawati, 2022; Akinyemi et al., 2021) primarily examined general adolescent reproductive health or stress without specifying age or school context. This research fills that gap by identifying the direct relationship between family support and anxiety at the onset of menstruation, highlighting how emotional reassurance and informational guidance operate in tandem. The findings contribute new insights into adolescent mental health in Indonesia, where data on menarche-specific anxiety remains limited (Rahman & Begum, 2021). Moreover, the study demonstrates that even moderate levels of family support can meaningfully reduce anxiety, suggesting that targeted interventions could enhance adolescent well-being even if high support is not universally available (Rodriguez et al., 2022).

The findings have practical implications for parents, educators, and health practitioners. Schools could implement parent-inclusive menstrual education programs and community health initiatives that train families in effective communication strategies about puberty and menstruation. By fostering supportive home environments, adolescents can develop healthier attitudes toward reproductive changes, experience reduced anxiety, and demonstrate improved emotional resilience. Furthermore, these results provide a basis for longitudinal research exploring how early family support influences adolescent coping and well-being over time, potentially informing national adolescent health policies.

CONCLUSION

This study found a significant negative relationship between family support and anxiety in seventh-grade female adolescents at SMP Negeri 9 Purwakarta facing menarche ($p < 0.05$; $r = -0.62$), indicating that higher family support is associated with lower anxiety levels. Emotional support, such as reassurance and encouragement, and informational guidance, including explanations about menstrual physiology and hygiene, were particularly effective in helping adolescents adapt to this transitional period. These findings answer the research objectives by confirming the crucial role of both emotional and informational family support in reducing menarche-related anxiety and provide empirical evidence in an Indonesian school context, addressing a gap in global and national research. The results imply that schools, parents, and local health services should actively engage in reproductive health education programs to enhance parental involvement and adolescent preparedness. For future research, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the long-term effects of family support on adolescent mental health, while additional studies could examine the combined impact of peer support, school-based health programs, and digital health education in minimizing anxiety during menarche.

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