

The Relationship Between Parental Support and Adolescent Anxiety Levels in Facing Menarche

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ABSTRACT

Background: Menarche is an important developmental milestone in adolescent girls that may trigger anxiety, particularly when not accompanied by adequate parental support.

Objective: This study aims to analyze the relationship between parental support and the level of anxiety among adolescents facing menarche at SDN Semper Timur 01.

Methods: This study employed a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The sample consisted of 63 respondents selected using total sampling. Data were collected using a parental support questionnaire consisting of 16 items with a 4-point Likert scale and the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS) consisting of 28 items with a Guttman scale. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square test.

Results: The results showed a statistically significant relationship between parental support and anxiety levels among adolescents facing menarche ($p = 0.03$; $OR = 5.6$). Adolescents who did not receive adequate parental support were 5.6 times more likely to experience clinical anxiety compared to those who received adequate parental support.

Conclusion: In conclusion, parental support plays an important role in reducing anxiety among adolescents facing menarches. Therefore, parents are encouraged to actively provide accurate information and emotional support to help adolescents better prepare for and cope with menarche.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood characterized by biological, psychological, and social changes. One of the important biological changes experienced by adolescent girls is puberty, which includes the maturation of reproductive organs and the occurrence of menarche or first menstruation. Menarche is an important development milestone because it indicates the beginning of reproductive maturity. In general, menarche occurs at the age of 12–14 years, although its onset may vary among individuals and has tended to occur at an earlier age in recent decades [1]. Menarche is also followed by various physical changes, including the development of reproductive organs and the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics [2].

Although menarche is a normal physiological process, its occurrence may be followed by psychological responses, particularly anxiety. Anxiety in facing menarche may arise when adolescent girls have insufficient knowledge, inadequate preparation, and limited understanding of the physical and psychological changes they are experiencing. These conditions may cause adolescents to feel afraid, worried, embarrassed, confused, or uncomfortable when experiencing their first menstruation [3]. The psychological response may become more pronounced when adolescents do not receive adequate information and emotional support from their immediate environment.

Information and social support are important factors in preparing adolescent girls to face menarche. In Indonesia, adolescents still obtain information about menarche from various sources, including peers, while the role of the family may remain limited [3]. Information obtained from peers or other informal sources may not always be accurate or adequate to prepare adolescents psychologically and practically for menstruation. In DKI Jakarta, menarche commonly occurs between the ages of 11 and 14 years, indicating that elementary school girls are within an age range in which preparation for menarche is important [4]. Therefore, preparation should ideally begin

before menarche occurs so that adolescents can understand menstruation as a normal biological process rather than as an experience that needs to be feared.

Several factors may influence anxiety in facing menarche, including age, knowledge, sources of information, self-preparedness, and parental support [5]. Among these factors, parental support has an important role because parents are the closest source of information and emotional support for adolescents. Parents can provide support through accurate information, attention, encouragement, emotional reassurance, and open communication about menstruation. Adequate parental support can help adolescents understand menarche as a normal physiological process, increase their sense of security, and strengthen their confidence as they face physical changes. Conversely, inadequate parental support may contribute to confusion, fear, and increased anxiety [3].

Previous research has demonstrated the importance of parental support in adolescent psychological readiness for menarche. [6] reported a significant relationship between parental support and anxiety among adolescents facing menarche. This finding indicates that adolescents who receive adequate support from their parents tend to have better psychological preparation in facing menstruation. However, anxiety surrounding menarche cannot be viewed solely from the perspective of biological age because adolescents of similar ages may demonstrate different levels of readiness depending on the knowledge, information, and social support they receive.

The preliminary study at SDN Semper Timur 01 also highlights the importance of parental support. The preliminary study involved 14 female students. Most of the students stated that they were not ready to face menarche because they received limited support from their mothers, both in terms of information and psychological support. The students also expressed feelings of fear and anxiety when imagining or experiencing their first menstruation. These preliminary findings indicate that the students' need for adequate preparation and parental support may not yet be fully met.

The preliminary findings strengthen the existence of a research gap between the need for parental support in preparing adolescent girls for menarche and the actual support experienced by students at the research site. Although previous studies have examined the relationship between parental support and adolescent anxiety, research focusing on adolescent girls at the elementary school level, particularly in the context of SDN Semper Timur 01, remains important to provide evidence regarding the condition of students at the local level. Furthermore, identifying the relationship between parental support and anxiety can provide a basis for strengthening collaboration between parents, schools, and health workers in adolescent reproductive health education.

Based on the description above, parental support is an important factor that needs to be examined in relation to adolescent anxiety in facing menarche. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between parental support and anxiety levels among adolescents facing menarche at SDN Semper Timur 01. The findings are expected to contribute to strengthening parental involvement and reproductive health education so that adolescent girls can obtain adequate information, emotional support, and psychological preparation before facing menarche.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative, correlational, cross-sectional design. This design was used to analyze the relationship between the independent variable, namely parental support, and the dependent variable, namely the level of anxiety among adolescents in facing menarche. The study was conducted at SDN Semper Timur 01 from April to May 2025. The population in this study consisted of all female students in grades IV, V, and VI at SDN Semper Timur 01, totaling 63 people. The entire population was used as the research sample using the total sampling technique, considering that the population size was relatively small, allowing all subjects to be studied comprehensively.

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire instrument. Parental support was measured using a questionnaire adapted from Ernia's instrument (2018) and modified by [6], consisting of 16 positive statements with a 4-point Likert scale. Anxiety levels were measured using the Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS) questionnaire, which consists of 28

statement items with yes and no answer options, arranged based on the Guttman scale. The instruments used had undergone validity and reliability tests in previous studies and were therefore deemed suitable for use as measuring tools in this study.

The questionnaires were distributed directly to the respondents with permission from the school and teacher assistance. This study also paid attention to research ethics by providing explanations to respondents and their parents and obtaining informed consent before the questionnaires were filled out. The confidentiality of respondents' identities was maintained throughout the research process. The data source used was primary data obtained directly from the results of questionnaires completed by the respondents.

In addition, a preliminary study was conducted through brief interviews with 14 female students as supporting data to strengthen the research background. The preliminary interviews were conducted to identify the students' initial readiness and psychological condition in facing menarche, particularly in relation to parental support and feelings of fear or anxiety.

The data were analyzed univariately and bivariately. Univariate analysis was used to describe the frequency distribution and percentage of each research variable, while bivariate analysis was used to test the relationship between parental support and the level of anxiety in adolescents facing menarche. The statistical test used was the Chi-Square test with a significance level (α) of 0.05. A p-value < 0.05 was interpreted as a statistically significant relationship between the variables studied.

RESULTS

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Age, Parental Support, and Anxiety Levels (n = 63)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Mean $\pm$ SD	Min–Max
Age (years)					
Parental Support	Supportive	20	31.7	11.21	10–12
	Not supportive	43	68.3		
	Total	63	100		
Anxiety Level	Normal	30	47.6		
	Clinical anxiety	33	52.4		
	Total	63	100		

Based on Table 1, the mean age of respondents at SDN Semper Timur 01 was 11.21 years, with ages ranging from 10 to 12 years. Regarding parental support, most adolescents (68.3%) did not receive adequate parental support, while 31.7% reported receiving support. Regarding anxiety levels, more than half of the respondents (52.4%) experienced clinical anxiety, while 47.6% were categorized as having normal anxiety. This finding indicates that anxiety is relatively common among adolescents facing menarche, particularly in the absence of adequate parental support.

Table 2. Analysis of the Relationship Between Age and Anxiety Levels in Adolescents (n = 63)

Age	Normal n (%)	Clinical Anxiety n (%)	Total	p-value
10 years	2 (3.2%)	1 (1.6%)	3	0.758
11 years	20 (31.7%)	24 (38.1%)	44	
12 years	8 (12.7%)	8 (12.7%)	16	
Total	30 (47.6%)	33 (52.4%)	63	

Table 2 shows the distribution of anxiety levels across different age groups. Among adolescents aged 10 years, most were in the normal category, while a small proportion experienced clinical anxiety. At age 11, which represents the majority of respondents, a higher number of adolescents experienced clinical anxiety compared to those with normal anxiety. At age 12, the proportion between normal and clinical anxiety was equal.

However, the results of the Chi-Square test showed a p-value of 0.758 ($p > 0.05$), indicating that there is no statistically significant relationship between age and anxiety levels among adolescents facing menarche. This suggests that age alone is not a determining factor of anxiety in this context.

Table 3. Analysis of the Relationship Between Parental Support and Adolescent Anxiety Levels in Facing Menarche (n = 63)

Parental Support	Normal n (%)	Clinical Anxiety n (%)	Total n (%)	OR	95% CI	p-value
Supportive	15 (23.8%)	5 (7.9%)	20 (31.7%)	5.600	1.703–18.420	0.03
Not supportive	15 (23.8%)	28 (44.4%)	43 (68.3%)			
Total	30 (47.6%)	33 (52.4%)	63 (100%)			

Table 3 demonstrates the relationship between parental support and anxiety levels among adolescents facing menarche. Among those who received parental support, the majority experienced normal anxiety, while a smaller proportion experienced clinical anxiety. In contrast, among adolescents who did not receive parental support, a larger proportion experienced clinical anxiety compared to those with normal anxiety.

The Chi-Square test yielded a p-value of 0.03 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant relationship between parental support and anxiety levels. The odds ratio (OR = 5.600) suggests that adolescents who did not receive parental support were significantly more likely to experience clinical anxiety compared to those who received support. These findings highlight the important role of parental support as a protective factor in reducing anxiety among adolescents facing menarche.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the average age of respondents at SDN Semper Timur 01 is 11.21 years, which is classified as early adolescence. At this stage, adolescent girls begin to experience puberty, including menarche, which is often accompanied by physical and psychological changes. These changes can trigger anxiety if adolescents do not have adequate preparation and understanding about menstruation [7]. Lack of accurate information can cause adolescents to feel afraid, embarrassed, and confused in facing changes in their bodies. The findings of this study indicate that the level of anxiety among adolescents in facing menarche is relatively high, with 52.4% of respondents experiencing clinical anxiety. This condition indicates that most adolescents do not yet have optimal psychological readiness. These results are in line with the research by [8], which states that adolescents aged 10–12 years tend to experience high anxiety when facing menarche, mainly due to a lack of adequate knowledge and support. Low knowledge causes adolescents to misinterpret menarche as a frightening condition, thereby exacerbating the anxiety they feel.

Based on bivariate analysis, age did not show a significant relationship with adolescent anxiety levels ($p = 0.758$). This finding indicates that age is not a major determinant of anxiety in facing menarche. Anxiety is more influenced by external factors, such as parental support and the availability of appropriate information. Although theoretically older adolescents have better emotional regulation skills, the results of this study show that without adequate support and education, adolescents of various ages remain at risk of experiencing anxiety. This reinforces the opinion of [9] that social support plays a more dominant role than age in influencing adolescents' psychological readiness. The main finding in this study is that there is a significant relationship between parental support and the level of anxiety in adolescents facing menarche ($p = 0.03$; OR = 5.6). These results indicate that adolescents who receive parental support are 5.6 times less likely to experience anxiety than those who do not receive support. Parental support, particularly in the form of information and emotional support, plays a crucial role in helping adolescents understand menarche as a normal biological process, thereby reducing fear and anxiety.

The results of this study are in line with the research by [6], which states that the higher the level of parental support, the lower the level of anxiety among adolescents in facing menarche. Emotional support from parents, especially mothers, provides a sense of security and increases adolescents' self-confidence. Conversely, a lack of parental support can cause adolescents to seek information from inappropriate sources, such as peers or the media, which has the potential to exacerbate anxiety [10]. Theoretically, these findings are in line with Peplau's interpersonal nursing theory, which states that anxiety can be minimized through social support from the immediate environment. Parents, as the primary support system, play an important role in shaping adolescents'

positive perceptions of the biological changes they experience. Support provided from an early age can help adolescents develop adaptive coping mechanisms in facing menarche.

The implications of this study emphasize the importance of the role of the family, especially parents, in adolescent reproductive health education. Providing appropriate education and continuous emotional support can be an effective strategy to reduce adolescent anxiety in facing menarche. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to be the basis for schools and health workers to actively involve parents in reproductive health education programs to improve the psychological readiness of adolescents

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that there is a significant relationship between parental support and anxiety levels among adolescents experiencing menarche at SDN Semper Timur 01. Adolescents who receive adequate parental support are less likely to experience anxiety because such support enhances their understanding of menarche and strengthens their emotional readiness during puberty. These findings highlight the important role of parents, particularly mothers, in providing early reproductive health education and maintaining open communication to help adolescents feel psychologically prepared for menarche. In addition, schools and healthcare providers should collaborate in implementing reproductive health education programs that actively involve both adolescents and their parents. Future studies are recommended to investigate other factors associated with adolescent anxiety and to employ longitudinal research designs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of psychological changes throughout adolescence.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

ChatGPT was used to assist with paraphrasing and improving the clarity of the manuscript. The authors reviewed and verified the content and take full responsibility for the final version.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Diah Nuraisah, Jehan Puspasari, and Veronica Yeni Rahmawati

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study. The research was conducted for academic purposes as part of the authors' final project.

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