ABSTRACT

Everyone has the right to enjoy the reproductive health, which is a basis for having intimate relationships, healthy children and happy families. The young girls (10 to 24 years of age) has special reproductive health needs before, during and beyond the child bearing age, which is a pre-requisite for the good future of their quality of life and safe motherhood. In this research study, an attempt was made to study the reproductive health and related problems among 679 young girls of urban, slum and rural areas of Gadag District. The descriptive, cross sectional, community based study was carried out on young girls who attained menarche. The major objectives of the study were to understand the young girls’ awareness and attitudes towards reproductive health, age at menarche, nutritional status, hygiene and cultural practice during menstruation, reproductive morbidities and parental involvement in dealing with reproductive health issues of young girls. The study also aimed to understand the impact of educational intervention programme on awareness and attitude of young girls towards reproductive health. The data were collected using pretested questionnaire and scales. The education materials were developed to create awareness on various reproductive health issues. The findings revealed that a considerable percentage of young girls were under mild to severe level of malnutrition. The reproductive health awareness among young girls was poor and they had neutral attitude towards pregnancy & teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS/STDs affected persons and conservative attitude towards family planning methods. The mean age at menarche in young girls was at normal age range. The cultural celebration and taboos related to menarche and menstruation was still in practice. The hygienic and sanitary protections during menarche and menstruation less prioritized in rural and slum compared to urban areas. The reproductive morbidities were prevalent in slum areas. Parents were the main sources of information on reproductive health. Mothers were actively involved in dealing with issues related to menarche, menstruation and marriage, but not involved with issues like sexuality and family planning. The educational intervention programme significantly influenced on level of awareness and changed the young girls’ attitude from conservative to liberal attitude. The research study highlights the need for educational intervention programme on reproductive health issue for both parents and young girls, especially before the onset of menarche.