

Health Problems of Reproductive System and Treatment Seeking Behaviour among Married Women in Selected Rural Community Dehradun, Uttarakhand

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Abstract: Reproductive health, a crucial aspect of general health is of significant importance for human development especially for women particularly during the reproductive years. Treatment seeking behaviour depends upon the individual perception when individual think it is normal or non-serious they do not take treatment. So this study was conducted (1) To assess the health problems of reproductive system among married women in selected rural community. (2) To identify the treatment seeking behavior towards health problems of reproductive system among married women. (3) To identify factors for not taking treatment towards health problems of reproductive system among married women. (4) To determine association between health problems of reproductive system and selected sociodemographic variables and selected reproductive characteristics of married women. **Methodology:** A Quantitative research approach was adopted for present study. Total 260 married women were selected through convenient sampling technique from community area (Rajiv Nagar, Doiwala). Data was collected through interview schedule. The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. **Results:** Out of 260 married women, 175 (67.30%) had one or more symptoms of health problems of reproductive system. Excessive vaginal discharge (40%) was most prevalent among married women. Out of 175 (67.30%) married women 118 (67%) had taken treatment. Majority (97.45%) taken allopathic treatment, 57 (33%) had not taken any treatment and give reason for not taking treatment. Majority of the women gave reasons that they did not have time or money to take the treatment. There was significant association between age and health problems of reproductive system among married women. There was significant association between history of abortion in the past and health problems of reproductive system among married women. **Conclusion:** It could be concluded that married women suffered with health problems of reproductive system and excessive vaginal discharge was most prevalent among them.

Keywords: Health problems of reproductive system, Married women, Treatment seeking behaviour

1. Introduction

Gynecological health is an important component of Women's health status as it has a remarkable impact on the quality of life. It affects not only the reproductive health but also her overall physical health status and ability to perform her daily routine activities.¹ Reproductive health, a crucial aspect of general health is of significant importance for human development especially for women particularly during the reproductive years. Most of the reproductive health problems arise during the reproductive years. Failure to deal with reproductive health problems later develop further problems.² Treatment seeking behaviour depends upon the individual perception when individual think it is normal or non-serious they do not take treatment. WHO reported that among adult woman one third of life lost because of reproductive health problems.³

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To assess the health problems of reproductive system among married women in selected rural community.
- 2) To identify the treatment seeking behaviour towards health problems of reproductive system among married women.
- 3) To identify factors for not taking treatment towards health problems of reproductive system among married women.

- 4) To determine association between health problems of reproductive system and selected sociodemographic variables.
- 5) To determine association between health problems of reproductive system and selected reproductive characteristics of married women.

2. Material & Methods

A Quantitative research approach with descriptive exploratory research design was adopted for the present study. A total of 260 married women were selected using convenient sampling technique from community area (Rajiv Nagar, Doiwala) Dehradun, the inclusion criteria were- (1) Women who were married. (2) Women who were in the age group of 18-60 years. (3) Women who gave voluntary consent to participate in the study. The exclusion criteria were- (1) Women who were pregnant. (2) Women who were within puerperal period (≤ 42 days of delivery). (3) Women who were lactating. (4) Women who were seriously ill. (Not related with health problems of reproductive system). Data was collected through interview schedule. The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

3. Results

Frequency and percentage distribution of participants according to Socio-demographic variables shows that study included 260 married women. According to the age among the married women maximum 180 (69.23%) were in

the age group of 19 -39 years and (30.77%) in the age group of 40-60 years. According to the educational status maximum 120 (46.1%) were matric passed and least (5.8%) were graduate or more. Majority 243(93.5%) of the married women were homemaker. Majority 243(93.5%) belonged to Hindu religion. Majority 193(74.2%) belonged to nuclear family. Majority 235(90.4%) were having monthly income between Rs.5001-15000/ and 1.9% had ≤ 5000 or ≥ 25000 /. 39.2% participants husband's age was 31-40 years. and only (0.4%) belonged to age group of more than 60 years. Half of the participants 50.8% husband's were matric passed, 38 % were having no formal education. Majority (98.5%) participants husband's were doing private job, only (1.5%) were doing Government job.

Frequency and percentage distribution of reproductive characteristics of married women reveals that majority 224(86.1%) of women attained menarche at the age between 13-15 years, 10% at 16-18 years, 3.9% at ≤ 12 . Majority 162 (62.3%) got married at ≤ 18 years, 36.5% at 19-23 years, 1.2% at 24-28 years. Majority 219 (84.3%) gave birth to child after 1-2 years of marriage. Majority 30.4 (30%) had three & four children followed by 23% having ≥ 5 children, 14.3% had two children, 1.5% had no child. Only 71(27.3%) women were using family planning method, 189 (72.7%) were not using any family planning method at present. Only 51(71.8%) using condom, 15.5% using Cu-T, 12.7% were using Mala -N, Mala -D as family planning method. Majority 112 (59.3%) women had used family planning methods in the past, 40.7% did not use any family planning method in past. Majority 78(69.6%) had tubectomy, 25% used condom, 4.5% used Mala -N, Mala -D, 0.9% used Cu-T in the past. Majority 164(63.1%) did not have history of abortion but 96 (36.9%) had history of abortion in the past.

Frequency and percentage distribution of health problems of reproductive system among married women reveals that majority 202(77%) of women were having menstruation, out of these 33.6% women reported irregular periods. 28% blood clots in menstrual bleeding, 25% foul smell during menstruation. 21.3% bleeding for more than 5 days, 11.4% bleeding for less than 3 days during menstruation. Itching in vagina was reported by 33.07%, ulcers in vagina by 2.69%. 44 (17%) reported burning during urination, 12.69 increased frequency of urination, 2.69% pain during urination, 0.38% blood in urine. Excessive vaginal discharge (leucorrhea) were reported by 103(40%), out of these foul smell vaginal discharge by 96.11%, white thick discharge by 97.08%, 40.77% discharge for more than 5 yrs, 70.87% followed by pain in back. 1.15% of women reported bleeding after intercourse, 1.53% of women having pain during intercourse. With regard to uterine prolapse 6.53% of women reported like something coming out through vagina, 6.92% pulling feeling in pelvis, and 6.15% were having feeling like sitting on ball. Urinary Incontinence- 13.84% reported that urine comes out through vagina during coughing and sneezing, 4.61% involuntary leaking of urine. Vaginal fistula -discharge or gas from vagina reported by 1.15%. STD- 0.38% diagnosed with STD had HIV.

Fibroid Uterus -1.92% married women were having fibroid uterus.

Regarding postmenopausal problem, out of 58 married women 5.17% reported bleeding after menopause, 25.86% having vaginal dryness, 3.45% having difficulty in holding urine.

Breast problem- 2.30% reported they have abnormal discharge from nipple, 0.76% women having lump in breast, Uterine cancer- (0.38%) had uterine cancer.

Frequency and percentage of treatment seeking behaviour for health problems of reproductive system among married women. Reveals that 118(67%) of married women were taking treatment for health problems of reproductive system. Out of these 97.45% were taking allopathic treatment to combat reproductive health problems followed by Ayurvedic 58.47%, Homeopathic treatment taken by 5.93% and only 3.38% consulted faith healers.

Frequency and percentage distribution of reasons for not taking treatment for health problems of reproductive system. Reveals that 57(33%) of married women reported health problems of reproductive system but did not take any treatment. 10.52% of study subjects reported that they did not have money to take treatment, 12.2% feeling shy, health centre was far from village, also had no time or money to take treatment. 14.03% of participants mentioned that they did not have time, money, 8.77% reported that they did not have money, health centre was far from village, no money, can not go alone to the hospital. 1.75% reported that they were feeling shy to report the problem, did not have time, health centre was far from village. 7.01% reported that they were feeling shy to report the problem, did not have money. 5.26% participants reported that they did not have time, no time, Health centre was far from village. 3.50% reported that they were feeling shy and health centre is far from village.

Association between health problems of reproductive system and selected Socio demographic variable. Since all data were categorical in nature, chi-square test was performed to find association. There was significant association found between health problems of reproductive system and age of married women. There was no statistically significant association with, education, occupation, religion, type of family, income per month. Hence, the hypothesis was accepted and null hypothesis was rejected.

Association between health problems of reproductive system and selected Reproductive characteristics of married women. There was significant association found between health problems of reproductive system and abortion. There was no statistically significant association with age of menarche, age at marriage, number of children, family planning method used by married women. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted.

4. List of Tables

Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of participants according to Socio-demographic variables, N=260

S.No	Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Age (in years)		
	19-39	180	69.23
	40-60	80	30.77
2	Education		
	No formal education	113	43.5
	Matric	120	46.1
	12 th	12	4.6
	Graduate or more	15	5.8
3	Occupation		
	Homemaker	243	93.5
	Service	17	6.5
4	Religion		
	Hindu	243	93.5
	Muslim	17	6.5
5	Type of family		
	Nuclear	193	74.2
	Joint family	67	25.8
6	Income per month(in Rs.)		
	≤5000/	5	1.9
	5001-15000	235	90.4
	15001-25000	15	5.8
	>25000	5	1.9
7	Husband's Age (in years)		
	20-30	71	27.3
	31-40	102	39.2
	41-50	41	15.8
	51-60	45	17.3
	More than 60	1	0.4
8.	Husband's Education		
	No formal Education	99	38.0
	Matric	132	50.8
	10+2	15	5.8
	Graduate or more	14	5.4
9.	Husband's Occupation		
	Govt.job	4	1.5
	Private job	256	98.5

Table 2: Frequency and percentage distribution of reproductive characteristics of married women N= 260

Reproductive characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age of Menarche(In years)		
≤12	10	3.9
13-15	224	86.1
16-18	26	10
Age at Marriage(In years)		
≤18	162	62.3
19-23	95	36.5
24-28	3	1.2
First child birth time after marriage (In years)		
No child	4	1.5
0-11 months	6	2.3
1-2yrs	219	84.3
3-4yrs	18	6.9
>4	13	5
Number of Children		
None	4	1.5
Two	37	14.3
Three	79	30.4
Four	80	30.8
≥5	60	23
Family planning method used (presently)		

Yes	71	27.3
No	189	72.7
If Yes, which Method		
Condom	51	71.8
Mala N, Mala D	9	12.7
Cu-T	11	15.5
If No, then any method used in past		
Yes	112	59.3
No	77	40.7
Which method-		
Condom	28	25
Mala N, Mala D	5	4.5
Tubectomy	78	69.6
Cu-T	1	0.9
History of abortion in the past		
Yes	96	36.9
No	164	63.1

Table 3: Frequency and percentage distribution of health problems of reproductive system among married women, N=260

Sr. No	Health problems of reproductive system	Frequency	Percentage(%)
1	Menstrual problem *		
	(n=202)	68	33.66
	Irregular periods	56	28
	Blood clots	50	25
	Foul smell menstrual bleeding	43	21.3
	More than 5 days	24	11.4
2	Vulval infection *		
	Itching in vagina	90	34.61
	Ulcers in vagina	07	2.69
3	Urinary Tract Infection *		
	*	44	17
	Burning during urination	33	12.69
	Increased frequency of urination	7	2.69
	Pain during urination	1	0.38
4	Excessive vaginal discharge(Leucorrhea) *		
	(n=103)	99	96.11
	Foul smell vaginal discharge	100	97.08
	White thick color discharge	42	40.77
	Discharge for more than 5 yrs	73	70.87
5	Postcoital problem *		
	Bleeding after intercourse	3	1.15
	Pain during intercourse	4	1.53
6	Uterine prolapse *		
	Something coming out through vagina	17	6.53
	Pulling feeling in pelvis	18	6.92
	Feeling like sitting on ball	16	6.15
7	Urinary incontinence *		
	Urine comes out during coughing and sneezing	36	13.84
	Involuntary leaking of urine	12	4.61
8	Vasico vaginal Fistula		
	Discharge or gas from vagina	3	1.15
9	STD		
	Diagnosed with STD	1	0.38

10 10.1	Fibroid uterus Diagnosed with Fibroid uterus	5	1.92
11 11.1 11.2 11.3	Postmenopausal problems * (postmenopausal women= 58) Bleeding after menopause Vaginal dryness Difficulty in holding urine	3 15 2	5.17 25.86 3.45
12 12.1 12.2	Breast problems * Abnormal discharge from nipple Lump in breast	6 2	2.30 0.76
13	Uterine cancer	1	0.38

*Multiple responses given by married women.

Ranking the health problems of reproductive system among married women

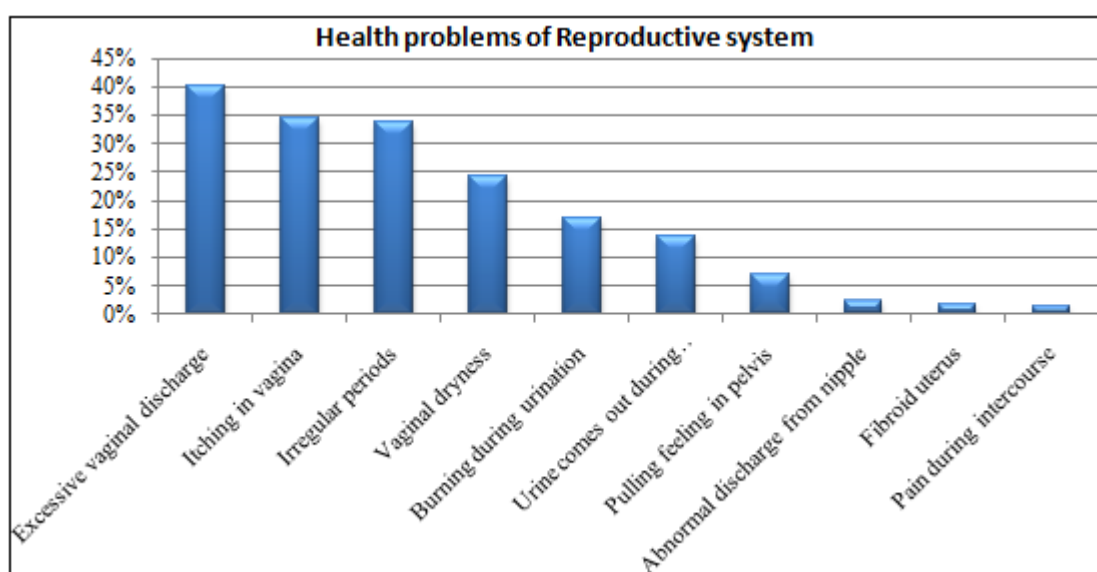


Figure 1: Showing the rank order of health problems of reproductive system among married women

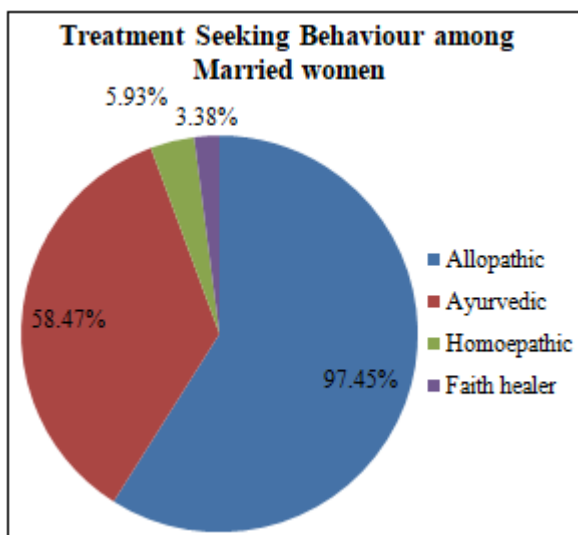


Figure 2: Percentage wise Distribution of Treatment seeking behaviour of married women

Table 4: Frequency and percentage distribution of reasons for not taking treatment for health problems of reproductive system among married women, N=260

S. No	Reason for not taking treatment	Frequency (n=57)	Percentage (%)
1	Did not have money	6	10.52
2	Feeling shy	7	12.2
3	Did not have time	8	14.03
4	Can not go alone	5	8.77
5	Health centre far from village	7	12.2
6	Did not have time + no money	8	14.03
7	Feeling shy+no time	1	1.75
8	Feeling shy+ no money	4	7.01
9	Health centre far +no money	5	8.77
10	No money+no time+Health centre far	3	5.26
11	No time+ health centre far	1	1.75
	Shyness +Health centre far	2	3.5

Table 5: Association between health problems of reproductive system and selected Socio demographic variables, N=260

S.No	Socio-demographic variables	Present	Absent	Chi-square /Yates correction	Df	p*-value
1	Age 19-39 40-60	128 47	52 33	3.846	1	0.050*
2	Education No formal education Literate	71 104	42 43	1.820	1	0.177
3	Occupation Home maker Service	163 12	80 5	0.089	1	0.766
4	Religion Hindu Muslim	163 12	82 3	0.634	1	0.4260
5	Type of family Nuclear family Joint family	43 132	61 24	.401	1	0.526
6.	Income per month Less than 15000 More than 15001	165 10	75 10	2.95	1	0.086

* significant $\chi^2 = 3.84$
P<0.05 level of significance

Table 6: Association between health problems of reproductive system and selected Reproductive characteristics of married women, N =260

S.No	Reproductive characteristics	Present	Absent	Chi-square	Df	p*-value
1.	Age of menarche ≤12-15 16-18	159 16	75 10	0.437	1	0.509
2.	Age at marriage ≤18 More than 18	55 30	107 68	0.309	1	0.578
3.	No.of children 0-3 4-6	83 92	37 48	0.350	1	0.554
4.	Family planning method used Yes No	49 126	22 63	0.129	1	0.719
5.	History of Abortion in the past Yes No	85 90	12 73	29.037	1	0.05 *

*significant $\chi^2 = 3.84$
P<0.05 level of significance

5. Discussion

Findings of the present study showed that out of 260, 175(67.30%) married women reported health problems of reproductive system. Majority 202 (77%) of women were menstruating, 33.6% reported irregular periods problem, followed by blood clots by 28%, foul smell by 25% during menstruation. 20.79% of women reported bleeding for more than 5 days, 11.88% of women with bleeding for less than 3 days during menstruation, itching in vagina reported by 34.61%, ulcers in vagina by 2.69%, 17% reported burning during urination, 12.69 % increased frequency of urination, 2.69% pain during urination, 0.38% blood in urine. Excessive vaginal discharge reported by 40%. Out of these foul smell leucorrhea by 96.11%, white thick discharge 97.08%, 40.77% discharge for more than 5 yrs, 70.87% followed by pain in back. Regarding the postcoital problem 1.15% of women reported bleeding after intercourse, 1.53% pain during intercourse, 6.53% symptoms like something coming out through vagina, 6.92% pulling feeling in pelvis, and 6.15% feeling like sitting on ball, 13.84% reported that

urine comes out through vagina during coughing and sneezing, 4.61% involuntary leaking of urine. Vaginal fistula symptoms reported by 1.15%, 0.38% diagnosed with STD had HIV, 1.92% fibroid uterus. Total 22.3% married women attained their menopause. Out of these 5.17% reported bleeding after menopause, 25.86% vaginal dryness, 3.44% difficulty in holding urine. 2.30% reported they abnormal discharge from nipple, 0.76% women having lump in breast, 0.38% uterine cancer.

Findings of the study were consistent with the study conducted by **Vasuki S, Jothy K (2014)**. Study Findings showed that out of 260, 117(45%) women reported that they experienced one or more problems. White discharge was the major problem reported by a majority (60.7%) of respondents followed by Excessive bleeding 38.5%, Abdominal pain/Backache 34.2%, and irregular menstrual periods 33.3%. Other problems like Urinary tract infection 19.7%, Painful menstruation 8.6%, Itching during menstruation 10.3% and scanty bleeding by 7.7%. Findings of the study were also consistent with the study conducted

by **Inamdar I.F, Sahu P, Doibale M.K (2013)**. Study findings showed that out of 750 married women, 25.2% had reproductive tract infection, 46.8% had menstrual disorders, 15.2% had pelvic organ prolapsed, 4% had urinary tract infection, 0.67% had fistula.² Findings of the study were also consistent with the study conducted by **Rani V, Dixit M. A, Kumar S et al. (2016)**. Study findings showed that out of 370 married women, 28.92% vaginal discharge, 21.08% lower abdominal pain, 20.27% menstrual problems, 4.05% pain / burning micturition, (0.27%) vaginal ulcer.⁷ Findings of the study were consistent with the study conducted by **Poornima S, Katti S.M, Mallapur M.D, Vinay M (2013)**. Study findings showed that out of 400 married women 5% had ulcers in genital areas, 20.75% reported menstrual problems, 11.75% reported abnormal white discharge, 12% reported abnormal backache, 5.50% reported postcoital pain, 2.25% swelling in breast.⁸ Findings of the study were also consistent with the study conducted by **Kaur S, Jairus R, Samuel G (2013)**. Study findings showed that out of 200 excessive vaginal discharge reported by 24.5%, Frequency of micturition reported 9%, mass protruding through vaginal wall reported by 8%, pain during coitus by 7.5%, dribbling of urine by 4%, scanty bleeding for less than 3 days by 12%.³ Findings of the study were also consistent with the study conducted by **Ravindra N, Puranik R (2016)**. Study findings showed that out of 100 Urban women 1.25% reported breast diseases, 20.33% menstrual problems, (2.25%) genital tract diseases. Out of 100 Rural women 2.75% reported breast diseases, 24.93% had menstrual problems, 8.125% had genital tract diseases.⁹ Findings of the study showed that 67% of married women were taking treatment for health problems of reproductive system. 97.45% of subjects sought allopathic treatment followed by Ayurvedic 58.47%, Homeopathic treatment taken by 5.93% and only 3.38% consulted faith healers. Findings of the study were consistent with the study conducted by **Kaur S, Jairus R, Samuel G (2013)**. Study findings showed that 52.5% of women took treatment, 31.5% of subjects sought allopathic followed by ayurvedic 10%, home remedies 7%, homeopathic treatment taken by 3% and only 2% women consulted faith healers.³ Findings of the present study showed that 57(33%) of married women did not take any treatment for health problems of reproductive system. Out of these 10.52% of study subjects reported that they did not have money to take treatment, 12.2% of participants reported that they were feeling shy to visit health centre, health centre is far from village, also had no time or money to take treatment. 14.03% of participants mentioned that they did not have time, money. 8.77% reported that they did not have money, health centre was far, no money, can not go alone to the hospital. Findings of the study were consistent with the study conducted by **Kaur S, Jairus R, Samuel G (2013)**. Study findings showed that reason for not seeking treatment among 45% women was that they considered all these symptoms as normal followed by 16.5% reported that they can not afford the treatment.³ Findings of the present study showed that there was significant association between health problems of reproductive system with age of the married women. Findings of the study were consistent with the study conducted by **Rani V, Dixit M.A, Kumar S et al. (2016)**. Result showed that there was significant association between reproductive morbidities and age of married women.⁷ Findings of the study were also consistent

with the study conducted by **Inamdar I.F, Sahu P, Doiwale M.K (2013)**. Result showed that there was significant association between gynaecological morbidities and age of married women.² Findings of the present study showed that there was no statistically significant association with age of menarche, age at marriage, number of children, family planning method used by married women. There was significant association found between health problem of reproductive system and history of abortion in the past. Findings of the study were contrary with the study conducted by **Rani V, Dixit M.A, Kumar S et al. (2016)**. There was no significant association between reproductive morbidities and abortion, family planning methods used by married women.⁷

6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it can be concluded that married women had problems related to reproductive system and excessive vaginal discharge (leucorrhea) was most prevalent among them.

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