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**Original article:**

**Prevalence and coping mechanisms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) using a questionnaire and calendar technique**

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**Abstract**

**Introduction:** With increasing awareness about various gynecological problems and menstrual abnormalities, it is important to know the level of awareness of PMS in women.

**Objectives:** To determine the prevalence of PMS, coping mechanisms used and to compare symptoms reported in the menstrual calendar and questionnaire.

**Method:** A cross-sectional study was conducted over a period of two months in students of a Medical College. Data was collected using a questionnaire (Phase 1 & 3) and a menstrual calendar (Phase 2). Fourteen symptoms were considered to assess PMS. Analysis was done by McNemar’s Chi Square test.

**Results:** The most commonly reported symptoms on the analysis of the menstrual calendars were psychological including feeling sad/cranky/depressed (41.7%) and outbursts of anger/bad temper/frustration (34.81%). The other common complaints were rashes/acne, fatigue and pain in the back or pelvic region. The symptoms were classified as those related to fluid retention, pain, psychological symptoms, behavioural symptoms and others including GIT symptoms, acne, changes in sleep cycle etc.

**Conclusion:** This study thus shows the high prevalence of premenstrual syndrome as a common problem faced by majority of college going girls and also affects their daily lives. It has also shown that they are well aware about the problem. Also, the menstrual calendar has been an effective tool to identify the problems of PMS and has revealed that the girls are unable to identify symptoms of pain as a problem of PMS or dysmenorrhea. There is a recall bias in the reporting of the pain symptom with many girls reporting PMS as dysmenorrhea. The menstrual calendar can be used as an effective tool to accurately collect data regarding these symptoms.

**Keywords:** Premenstrual syndrome, dysmenorrhea