

“La información es la que guía”: Knowledge, Experiences, and Concerns of Puerto Rican Primary Caregivers Related to Menstrual Health Education

“La información es la que guía”: Conocimientos, experiencias y preocupaciones de cuidadores primarios puertorriqueños en relación con la educación sobre la salud menstrual

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Abstract: Menstrual health education is an essential component of menstrual health and preventive care for menstruating persons. Previous data from a survey of 1,096 Puerto Rican teens showed that 60% of participants reported that they received their menstrual health education at home, second only to school (72%). The current phase of our study uses a mixed methods approach to assess and explore the knowledge, needs, and concerns regarding menstrual health education of teens by centering the experiences and perspectives of primary caregivers of Puerto Rican adolescents. In this study, we report on the results from our test assessing participants’ menstrual health knowledge from initial focus groups, which were composed of mothers and grandmothers from diverse backgrounds. The test results revealed that perceived preparedness to educate their daughters and granddaughters on the menstrual cycle did not necessarily reflect having accurate knowledge of the menstrual cycle. The focus group discussions highlight concerns regarding how to openly and adequately communicate menstrual health knowledge to their teens. Participants also expressed a need for comprehensive and accurate educational resources (e.g., workshops) to better support their teens’ menstrual healthcare at home and at school. These preliminary findings suggest that menstrual health education resources should be more accessible to teens and their caregivers, and awareness raised to create supportive, stigma-free environments for these discussions. Future focus groups will contribute to the development of menstrual health education programs for teens and their primary caregivers, with the goal of providing effective strategies that meet the needs of both.