

Statement submitted by Haiti Cholera Research Funding Foundation Inc

We join this statement to urge the 56th Session of the Commission Population Development to address menstrual hygiene management education: heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding (menorrhagia) related to the End Period Project in the Hispanic community in the theme “Population, education and sustainable development”.

Sumpter, C., et al 2013 revealed that across the globe menstruation and its management have important social and cultural implications which may in turn impact women and girls’ lives. In some cultures girls become marriageable and are regarded as able to bear children with the onset of menstruation. The sexual and disgust connotations of menstruation make it a taboo subject for girls to raise, even with their mothers. Without good information, young girls may be frightened at the onset of their period and may be anxious about the process.

One study revealed that every day, schoolgirls in low-income countries discover blood on their underwear for the first time, feel an uncomfortable cramping in their lower abdomen, and find themselves in a setting without toilets, water, or a supportive female teacher to explain the change happening in their body (Sommer, M., et al, 2013).

Menstruation is a natural process that gives rise to several fluctuations in a female life that causes emotional and psychological instability. The Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) of WHO and UNICEF defined menstrual hygiene management (MHM) as “Women and adolescent girls using a hygienic menstrual management material to collect blood that can be changed in privacy as often as necessary for the duration of the menstrual period, using soap and water for washing the body as required, and having access to facilities to dispose of used menstrual management materials” (Asumah, M., et al. 2022).

According to the CDC, menorrhagia is menstrual bleeding that lasts more than 7 days. It can also be bleeding that is very heavy. Untreated heavy or prolonged bleeding can stop a girl or woman from living their lives to the fullest. It also can cause anemia, a common blood problem that can leave you feeling tired or weak.

Causes of heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding

An ovulation occurs when a girl’s or woman’s ovaries do not produce and release an egg (ovulate) once per month.

Non-cancerous growths in the uterus can cause heavy menstrual bleeding.

Certain bleeding conditions or medications can cause heavy menstrual bleeding such as von Willebrand disease (Kaunit A., et al 2022).

In a study of 2,870 mothers across 18 cities in the United States of America, prevalence of major depression or generalized anxiety disorder increased with severity of food insecurity after controlling for factors such as income and past-year eviction. Menstrual hygiene is considered a basic need, yet very little research has examined how unmet menstrual hygiene needs may impact mental health. Only recently, and after much effort by a small group of researchers and advocates, has menstrual health and hygiene been recognized as a pressing public health issue (Cardoso, L.F., et al. 2021).