

Menarcheal age among urban Kenyan primary school girls

Abstract:

AIM: To determine the mean menarcheal age among urban primary school girls in Kenya.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS: A structured questionnaire was administered to 820 primary grade 6-8 girls aged between 12 and 17 years in five public primary schools, Langata division of Nairobi West district, Nairobi Kenya. The girls came from low and middle socioeconomic status residences. Declared menarcheal age by recall to the nearest month was recorded. Data were analysed using SPSS version 15.0 for windows. The results are presented using tables and bar charts. RESULTS: The mean menarcheal age was 12.5 ± 2.8 years with peak at 12-14 years. A substantial number of girls (10.8%) attained menarche before the age of 11 years, with 2% of them attaining it before 10 years. None attained menarche before nine or after 16 years. Of those who attained early menarche, 64.3% were from middle while only 35.7% came from low socioeconomic status residence, respectively. CONCLUSION: Mean menarcheal age of 12.5 years is lower than previously reported with over 10% of the girls attaining menarche by 11 years. Early commencement of reproductive health education and follow-up for complications of early menarche is recommended.