



Menstrual Hygiene Management for promoting adolescent health

The 7th Annual Course on School Health and Nutrition
Programmes in Asia

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Elli Sugita (Osaka University, Japan)

BREAK THE SILENCE on MENSTRUATION !!



WHEN MEN TALK

ABOUT PERIODS



THERE IS NOTHING

TABOO ABOUT IT!





(source: menstrual hygiene day, 2017)



Outline

1. Why menstruation matters?
2. Definition of MHM and its relation to SDGs
3. What can be done for MHM interventions?
4. One size fits all? A case study from rural Uganda



1. Why menstruation matters?


(1) Impact on health

- PMS (Pre-Menstrual Syndrome)
- Physical symptoms:
cramps, headache, backaches,
bloating, anemia
- Emotional symptoms:
mood swings, depression, lack of
concentration



Potential risk of poor menstrual hygiene

- Unclean sanitary materials,
Infrequent change of pads,
Bathing prohibited due to cultural norms
 - ⇒ Bacterial infection, Skin infection
- Using highly absorbent tampons during a
time of light blood loss
 - ⇒ toxic shock syndrome

- 
- Unsafe disposal of used sanitary materials or blood,
Lack of hand-washing after
changing sanitary materials
 - ⇒ Can facilitate the spread of
Hepatitis B or Thrush



(2) Impact on education

- Reduced school attendance
eg. In Ethiopia, 51% of girls miss
1~4 days/months
- Reduced school performance
eg. In Ethiopia. 39% reported
reduced performance

Reasons for absenteeism from school during menstruation

(A study in Nepal of 204 girls):

- Lack of **privacy** for **cleaning/washing** = 41.4%
- Lack of **disposal** system for pads/cloths = 28.2%
- Lack of **water supply** for cleaning = 22.7%
- **Pain/discomfort** = 16.2%
- **Shame** = 9.1%
- Socio-cultural **beliefs** = 5.4%
- **Fear** of menstrual accident (**leakage**) = 4.5%



(3) Impact on dignity and empowerment

- Many taboos for menstruating girls/women hindering to participate in certain activities
cf. “tapu” Polynesian word
- Shame, Embarrassment
- Don't want to stand up to answer during class



2. Definition of MHM and its relation to SDGs

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM):

(By WHO & UNICEF)

- the articulation, awareness, information and confidence to manage menstruation with safety and dignity using safe hygienic materials
- adequate water and agents and spaces for washing and bathing
- disposal with privacy and dignity.



UNESCO includes additional systemic factors in MHM;

- Informed and comfortable professionals
- Referral and access to health services
- Positive social norms
- Advocacy and policy.

MHM and SDGs

Good menstrual hygiene management (MHM) requires the following:



&

Additional systemic factors that impact good menstrual hygiene management (MHM):



MENSTRUATION MATTERS TO ACHIEVE THE SDGs

While there is no specific goal or indicator for MHM, menstruation matters to the following goals:

Goal 3

3



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

Goal 4

4



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.

Goal 5

5



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Goal 6

6



Ensure availability and sustainability of water and sanitation by all.

Goal 8

8



Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

Goal 12

12



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



3. What can be done for MHM interventions? (at or for schools)

(1) Education and information on MHM

- School campaign
- Including in school curriculum
- Health/Hygiene club at school

(2) Training of Teachers

(3) Providing more sanitary material options

- Supplying pads at schools
- Developing Reusable pads



(source :
Afripad 2015)

(4) Improving school latrine with washing facilities

MHM-friendly WASH facilities

School latrine design India

- Water inside the latrine
- Integrated incinerator
- Disposal bin



Photo: WaterAid

(Source: Menstrual Hygiene matters, 2012)

(5) Constructing Disposal facilities



(source : BRAC 2015)

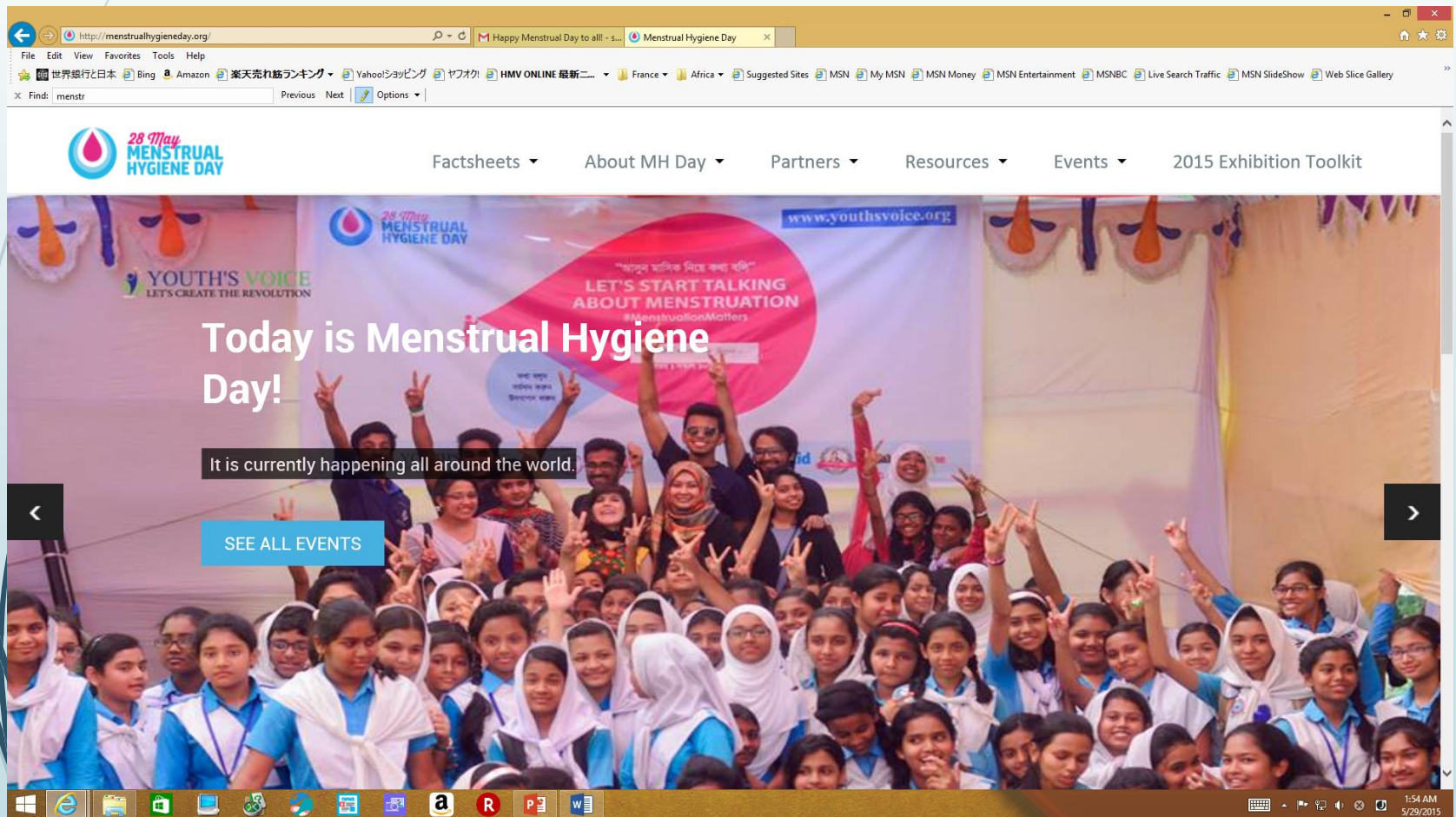


(source : SuSanA 2012)

(6) Advocacy

May 28th as “Menstrual Hygiene Day”

<http://menstrualhygieneday.org/>



The screenshot displays the homepage of the Menstrual Hygiene Day website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://menstrualhygieneday.org/>. The website's header includes the logo for "28 May MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY" and a navigation menu with links to Factsheets, About MH Day, Partners, Resources, Events, and a 2015 Exhibition Toolkit. The main content area features a large photograph of a diverse group of young women, many in school uniforms, posing and making peace signs. Overlaid on the image is the text "Today is Menstrual Hygiene Day!" and "It is currently happening all around the world." A blue button labeled "SEE ALL EVENTS" is positioned below the text. In the background, a banner for "YOUTH'S VOICE LET'S CREATE THE REVOLUTION" and "28 May MENSTRUAL HYGIENE DAY" is visible, along with the slogan "LET'S START TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION #MenstruationMatters". The website footer shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system clock indicating 1:54 AM on 5/29/2015.



(7) Policy making

- ➡ Collaboration between the **ministries** responsible for education, health, water and local government to develop school water, sanitation and hygiene **guidelines and policies**



4. One size fits all?

A case study from rural Uganda

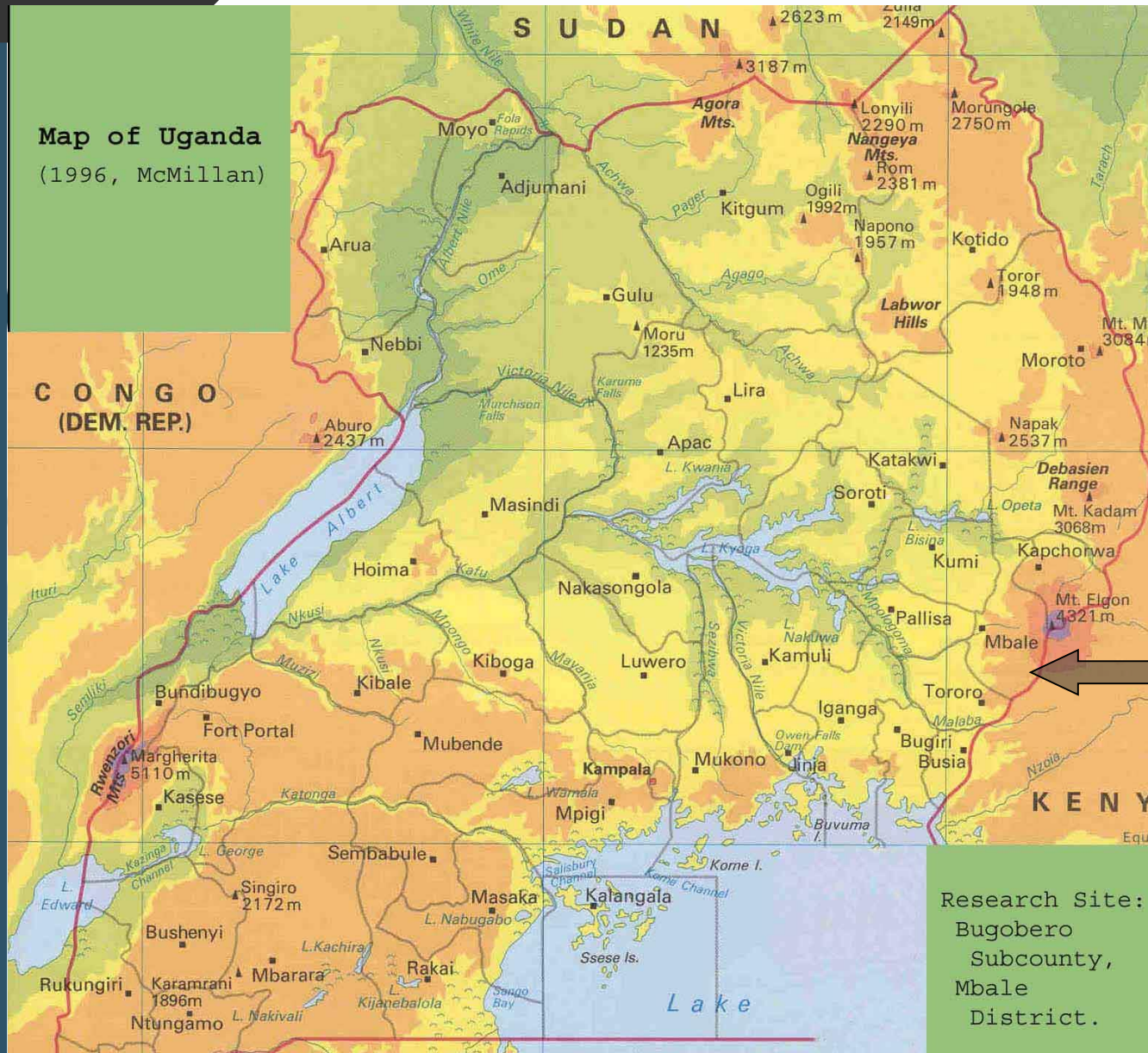


Uganda MHM Policies

- Aug. 2014 International Meeting on MHM with the support from UG gov.
- May. 2015 “Menstrual Hygiene Charter” approved by the parliament
- “School should have adequate latrine, hand washing facility, provide pads, underwear and uniforms in case of emergency, allocate support teacher.”

Research in an area without any intervention

Map of Uganda
(1996, McMillan)



Rural Uganda

Manafwa
District

Research Site:
Bugobero
Subcounty,
Mbale
District.



Research Area

- Rural Uganda (Manafwa District)
- Government Secondary School
(O-level & A-level) * Uganda: 7-4-2 system
- School has a rain tank but dries up during dry season
- Students also uses community's borehole behind the school
- There are school latrines but no water
- Has a small dormitory





Research Method

- ① O-level 3rd and 4th year female students:
 - Questionnaire (N=90)
 - FGD (4 groups, total N=29)
- ② A Secondary school and a primary school teachers :
 - Key informant interviews (N=2)




Results

- Ethnicity : Bagisu 98%
- Average age : 17.0
(min: 12, max: 25)
- menarche : average 14.6 years old
(min:10, max: 17)
- School missed :average 2.3 days/year,
35% said they had missed 1 day or more.



Result: knowledge

- Learned about menstruation before menarche : 47%
⇒ More than half had no knowledge
- Learned from mother 81%
 - from paternal aunt 8%
 - from sister 5%
 - from teacher 4%

- 
- According to the school curriculum, menstruation is taught at Primary 5, 6 and Secondary 4



- In rural area, many students repeat and may have late teens in Primary 5
Even 20s in Secondary school

⇒ too late?

- Teaching contents as “biology” and “reproductive system”

⇒ Not practical knowledge

Result: Taboos

➤ Taboos related to agriculture

- Restricted to enter or work at the gardens of g-nuts, sweet potatoes and pumpkins
- Restricted to climb mango and jackfruit trees
⇒ dry up, bad harvest

➤ Taboos related to Christianity

- Restricted going to church
- Cannot participate in the church choir
- Should not touch the Bible
⇒ offensive to Jesus



■ Taboos related to underwear and absorbents

- Should not dry them outside
- Used materials should be disposed where it is not accessible to anybody (or dogs)

⇒ Can be used for bewitching and get sterile

■ Taboos related to food and drinks

- Should not eat sugarcane
- Should not drink soda and milk
- Should not drink dry tea

⇒ menstrual blood would increase

Result: Sanitary materials used

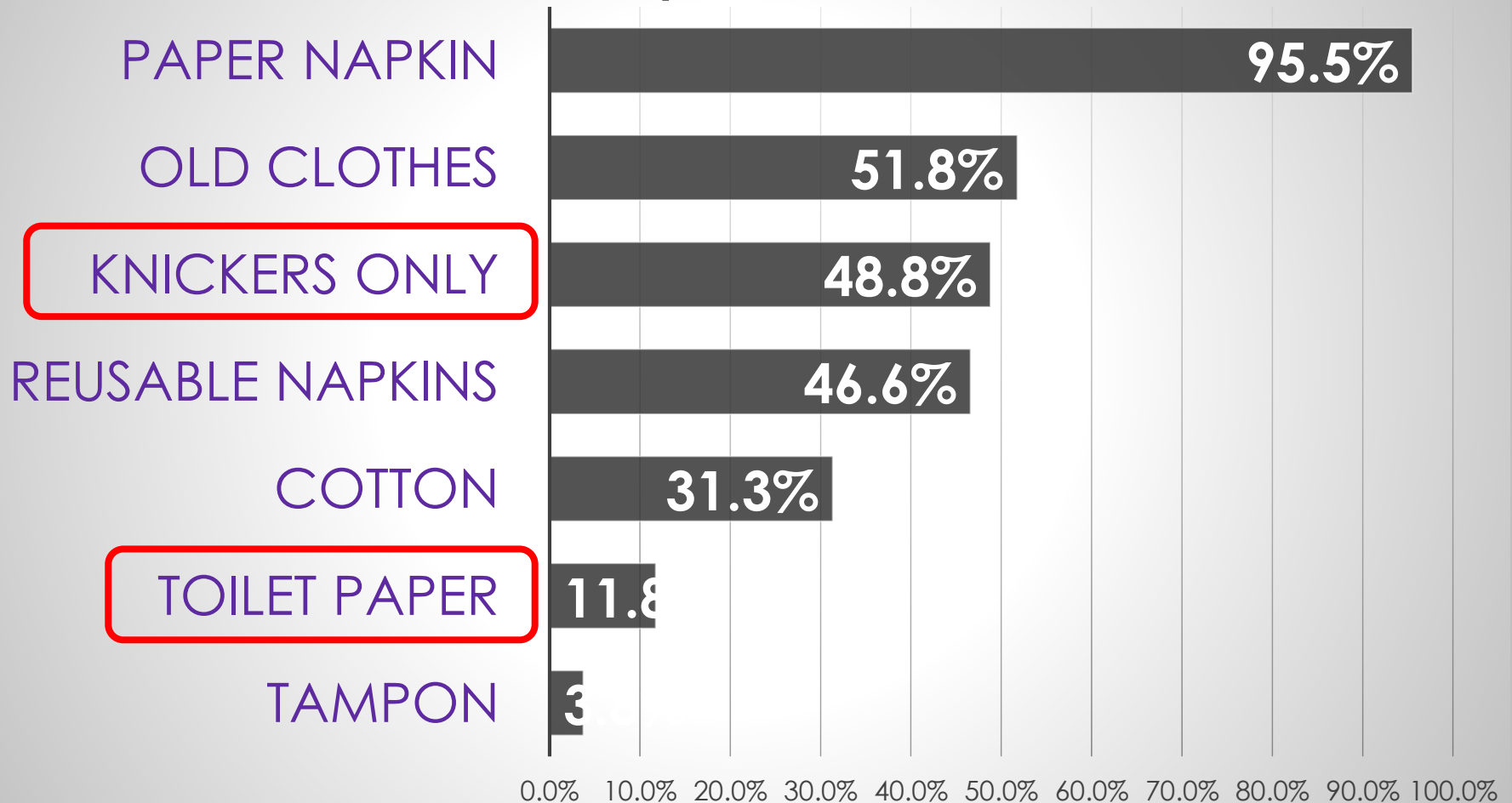
- *Ifungo: traditional absorbent made from banana leaves, used like tampon*



- *some older women use it but secondary school girls did not even know about it.*

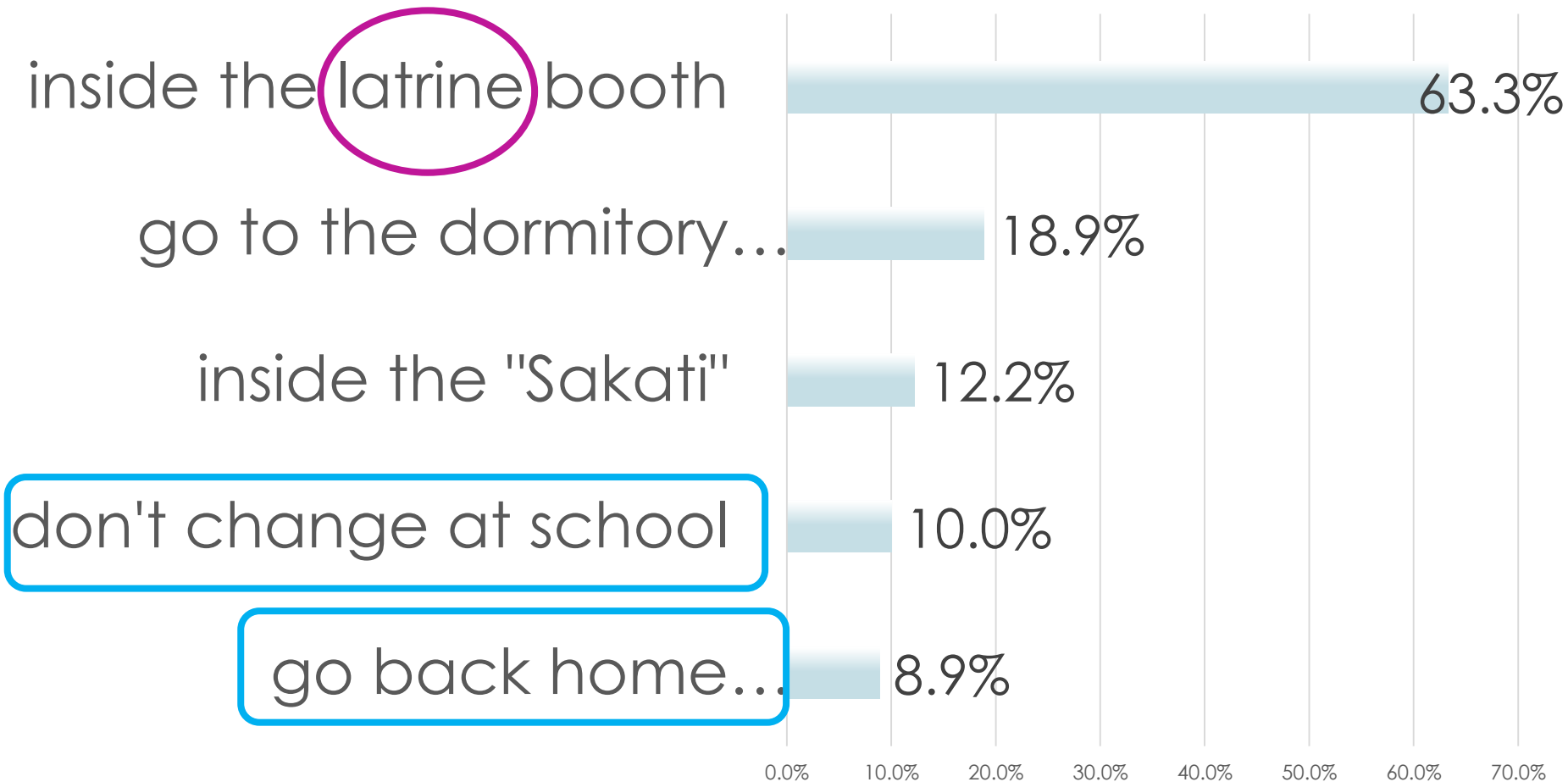
Sanitary goods used by students

(multiple choice)



Where do you change your sanitary goods

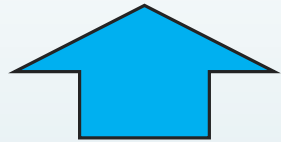
(multiple choice, n=90)





How do they dispose of (at school)

► Inside pit latrine 98%



Fear of being used in bewitching

“Even if a dustbin was installed in the latrine, I cannot discard my used pads in it. My step-mother can be watching from distance and take it to the witch doctor.”



How do they wash reusable materials?

► Old clothes, reusable napkins, knickers :

Wash with soap and dry it

- under the bed (at the rim of a basin)
- outdoor bathing area covered with thin clothes



Fear from used for bewitching



Discussion

- 1) Need for information on menstrual hygiene
- 2) Cultural taboos and norms may not be easy to change in short periods.
(Some cultural norms are protective of women)



3) Local cultural beliefs and students perspectives should be addressed

⇒ How to dispose of the used materials? Dust bin, incinerator design?

⇒ Reusable pads can be unhygienic if not dried properly?

Thank you!! Arigato gozaimashita!



Elli Sugita, Ph.D.

(ellisugita@hus.osaka-u.ac.jp)

Associate Professor, Department of Human Sciences,
Osaka University, Japan



Useful Resources on MHM

- Menstrual hygiene matters: A resource for improving hygiene around the world

<https://washmatters.wateraid.org/publications/menstrual-hygiene-matters>

- Menstrual Hygiene Day

<http://menstrualhygieneday.org/>

<http://menstrualhygieneday.org/resources-mhm/>

- Menstrupedia

<https://www.menstrupedia.com/>