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Perceived health, suicide risk and menarche in Korean adolescents

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Early puberty in girls has been identified as an important risk factor for various health problems, such as depression and suicidal attempts. This study was performed to evaluate the perceived health and suicide risk among students with early, on-time, and late menarche in middle and high school. The subjects were selected using data from the 9th Korea Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey 2013 (KYRBS), which included 35,739 girls from 1st grade of middle school to 3rd grade of high school. Data were analyzed using the PASW 18.0 program. Mean age of menarche in Korean adolescents was 11.98 years. Early onset refers to menarche before 10 years, and late onset refers to menarche after 13 years, including those who had not experienced menstruation after 13 years old. Among participants, 1,816 (5.1%) had early menarche, 18,682 (52.3%) had on-time menarche, and 15,241 (42.6%) had late menarche. There were statistically significant differences among three groups in perceived health ($\chi^2=155.34$, $p<.001$), perceived body image ($\chi^2=1554.02$, $p<.001$), perceived happiness ($\chi^2=70.20$, $p<.001$), sad mood ($\chi^2=50.56$, $p<.001$), suicidal ideation ($\chi^2=90.23$, $p<.001$), suicidal plan ($\chi^2=120.56$, $p<.001$), and suicidal attempts ($\chi^2=113.40$, $p<.001$) within 1 year by onset of menstruation. In a multivariate logistic regression model, early menarche did persist as a risk factor for perceived health (OR: 1.24, 95%CI: 1.17-1.32) and body image (OR: 1.97, 95%CI: 1.86-2.09). Poor self-rated health, negative body image, and unhappiness are more common in early menarche adolescents. Teachers and parents should pay attention to the psychological health needs of early mature adolescent.

Biography

Ju-Young Ha is an Associate Professor at Pusan National University College of Nursing. She has completed her PhD in college of Nursing Science from Ewha Woman's University, Seoul, Korea. The main courses she teaches at Pusan National University include women's health nursing and gerontological nursing. Her research area includes reproductive health promotion for women aged over 35 and elderly care. She has numerous publications in reputed journals utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and also has numerous presentations at local, national, international and invited. She has been serving as an Editorial Board Member of repute.

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