

The Predisposing Factors Of Personal Hygiene Behavior Of Women Of Childbearing Age In Preventing Leucorrhea



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ABSTRACT

Abnormal vaginal discharge in women of childbearing age becomes worse if it is not treated immediately because it can cause ectopic pregnancy and infertility. The low level of knowledge on hygiene of the reproductive organs often results in women ignoring it and assuming that vaginal discharge is a common health problem. The aim of the study was to analyze the personal hygiene behavior of women of childbearing age in preventing leucorrhea in the Muncar coastal area, Banyuwangi Regency. This type of research is a qualitative method using a case study approach (Case Studies). Informants in this study amounted to 30 people. The results showed that most of the main informants had knowledge about the meaning of leucorrhea, its causes, signs and symptoms, and prevention of leucorrhea. The main informants get knowledge through social media, health workers, and the people closest to them. A small number of key informants did not know about the meaning of leucorrhea, its causes, signs and symptoms, and prevention of leucorrhea due to a lack of health information from health workers, social media and close people. Suggestions for women of childbearing age should improve personal hygiene for themselves. Be more open and communicate well about vaginal discharge with health workers, family and close friends.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the WHO (*World Health Organization*) which discusses *personal hygiene* to prevent leucorrhea, it states that vaginal discharge is experienced by almost all women, with 60% occurring in women aged 15-22 years and 40% occurring in women aged 23-45 years. Based on reproductive health research data related to the use of contraceptives which can cause vaginal discharge, it is found that as much as 75% of vaginal discharge is experienced by all women in the world at least 1-2 times during their lifetime. In Indonesia, the incidence of vaginal discharge continues to increase every year, reaching 70% (Nengsih *et al.*, 2022:227-228).

Leucorrhea is a health problem that has long been a problem for women. Leucorrhea is not always pathological, but in general everyone thinks that vaginal discharge is normal.

Leucorrhea occurs before menstruation or after menstruation and will disappear by itself. However, if abnormal (pathological) vaginal discharge can be an indication of a disease that must be treated, it is necessary to carry out regular maintenance of the reproductive organs, such as cleaning them with running water and washing them properly, from front to back (Hanifah *et al.*, 2021:112-113). Symptoms of vaginal discharge are mostly experienced by women of childbearing age between the ages of 15-49 years. It can be seen that many studies state that the level of knowledge regarding cleanliness of the reproductive organs in the form of vaginal discharge is still very low, so women often ignore it and think that vaginal discharge is a common health problem (Sembring *et al.*, 2021:84).

Women of Reproductive Age (WUS) means that women who are still vulnerable to reproductive age or usually occur from the first menstruation until the end of menstruation, namely aged 15-49 years and have unmarried status, married, widowed, and those who still have the potential to have children (Isnaini & Susilawati, 2019:170). Leucorrhea is one of the natural things experienced by every woman. But on the other hand vaginal discharge is an infectious disease that is often experienced by women through the reproductive tract. If the vaginal discharge becomes abnormal, it turns into an odor, has a yellowish color, and is accompanied by vaginal itching, so that this problem requires more specific action to prevent it by consulting a health service (Irna Trisnawati, 2021:45).

Indicators of healthy female reproductive organs include washing the female area after or defecating in the right direction from front to back, changing underwear at least twice a day, changing pantyliner every 3-4 hours, choosing pants underwear made of cotton or t-shirts that easily absorb sweat, do not use public bathrooms, use feminine soap when needed and clean pubic hair (Refti, 2018:55). Muncar District is a coastal area that has poor *personal hygiene* and sanitation which can cause health problems. The availability of water sanitation in the Muncar sub-district is still insufficient regarding the smell of water, the color of the water is still cloudy yellowish brown, and the water has a slight taste. Inadequate water quality is caused by pollution from factory waste, seawater and piles of garbage which make environmental sanitation unhealthy, namely smelling fishy and smelling bad.

Data on vaginal discharge examination results in women of childbearing age who use contraception at the Kedungrejo Health Center, Muncar District, show that in 2022 there will be 30 (78.9%) women of childbearing age who use injectable contraceptives, 26 (68.4%) normal vaginal discharge and vaginal discharge is not normally 4 (10.5%). 20 (52.6%) used implants, 19 (50.0%) normal vaginal discharge and 1 (2.6%) abnormal vaginal discharge. 18 (47.4%) used IUDs, 11 (28.9%) normal vaginal discharge and 7 (18.4%) abnormal vaginal discharge. Birth control pills 11 (28.9%), normal vaginal discharge 8 WUS (21.1%) and abnormal vaginal discharge 3 (7.8%). It can be concluded that most women of childbearing age experience normal vaginal discharge and the method of contraception that women of childbearing age are most interested in is injectable birth control.

The problem that occurs in Muncar Subdistrict is a Subdistrict that has strategic location criteria, close to the coast, fish factories, and tourist attractions so that it can cause many problems, especially related to poor *personal hygiene* and environmental sanitation. Another problem arises because there are still some women of childbearing age who do not know the importance of maintaining health, especially for the health of intimate organs. The lack of information sources and the lack of public knowledge regarding reproductive health is one of the problems where women of childbearing age make decisions that are not right (Ria Anugrahawati, 2019:25). Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the *personal hygiene* behavior of women of childbearing age in preventing leucorrhea in the Muncar coastal area, Banyuwangi Regency.

METHODS

This type of research is descriptive qualitative using a case study approach (*Case Studies*). This research was conducted in the coastal area of Kalimati Village, Muncar District, Banyuwangi Regency on 15 August 2022 – 15 September 2022. The informants involved in this study included key informants, main informants and additional informants. The key informants in this study were the midwives at the Kedungrejo Health Center, Muncar District. The main informants in this study were married women of childbearing age aged 25-37 years. Additional informants in this study were village midwives, husbands, parents, and friends. The involvement of key and additional informants was carried out to support the statements and to find out the condition and behavior of the informant's personal hygiene main.

Primary data collection was obtained through *in-depth interviews* based on interview instructions that had been prepared and secondary data obtained from other sources or data obtained indirectly as research reinforcement, namely, data on vaginal discharge examination results in women of childbearing age who use contraception in Kedungrejo Health Center, Muncar District, other sources such as journals or books that are relevant to the research topic. Determination of the main informants using a *purposive technique*. The *purposive* technique is a sampling technique for data sources that the person is considered to know best about what we expect. Data collection using *purposive* techniques was carried out until the data was saturated. Collecting data using *in-depth interviews*, observation, and documentation.

The credibility test uses source triangulation and technique triangulation. Triangulation of sources in this study was carried out through interviews with key informants and additional informants. Triangulation techniques in this study conducted interviews with key informants. The dependability test is carried out by conducting a thorough examination related to the research process and consulting experts. Examination and consultation were carried out together with the supervisor of the researcher. The data analysis used is *thematic content analysis* which is an analysis that aims to understand a culture that is described must be intact and comprehensive and applicable in a particular context. This research has received the Health Research Ethics Commission (KEPK) of the Faculty of Public Health, University of Jember with ethical test number No.248/KEPK/FKM UNEJ/VIII/2022.

RESULTS

An overview of the characteristics of research informants

The characteristics of the main informants studied included age, educational status, employment status, level of vaginal discharge, and method of treatment. The following is a table of data results for each of the characteristics of the main research informants:

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

No	Informant	Age (Years)	Education Status	Job Status	Leucorrhea	Treatment Method
1.	IU 1	35	SMA	Entrepreneur	Normal vaginal discharge	Traditional medicine
2.	IU 2	28	SMP	Entrepreneur	Not vaginal discharge	Medical treatment
3.	IU 3	25	SMA	Housewife	Normal vaginal discharge	Traditional medicine

4.	IU 4	29	SMP	Entrepreneur	Normal vaginal discharge	Never treated
5.	IU 5	30	SMA	Entrepreneur	Abnormal vaginal discharge	Tradisional medicine
6.	IU 6	37	SMA	Housewife	Not vaginal discharge	Tradisional medicine
7.	IU 7	28	SMA	Entrepreneur	Abnormal vaginal discharge	Tradisional medicine

Predisposing Factor

Knowledge of Women of Reproductive Age Regarding the Definition of Leucorrhea

The results of research related to knowledge regarding the meaning of vaginal discharge showed that most of the main informants had knowledge related to the meaning of vaginal discharge. The following are excerpts from in-depth interviews with key informants:

"...For me, vaginal discharge is right before menstruation and after that, sis. Because I myself experienced it so it's automatic, you know sis hehe..." (IU 2, 28 Years)

A small number of key informants did not know about the definition of malignant infection in the reproductive organs. As quoted from an in-depth interview with one of the informant as follows:

"....Genital diseases that are malignant are not just vaginal discharge, sis. You can get bitten by insects like scorpions or other insect fluids that stick to your underwear, we don't know, we just have to use it when it's in the cupboard. In my opinion, this is also a malignant infection, but it doesn't necessarily cause vaginal discharge, in my opinion, sis..." (IU 4, 29 years)

Knowledge of the Causes of Leucorrhea

The results of research related to the causes of leucorrhea show that most of the key informants have knowledge regarding excessive use of cleansing soap to clean the genitals continuously can cause vaginal discharge, as quoted from an in-depth interview with the following key informants :

"...use soap to clean the genitals, the problem is that it usually stings, and then the effect is also not good for health. I usually use boiled betel leaves, sis, it's actually good for washing genitals and for drinking..." (IU7, 28 years)

A small number of key informants did not know the causes of vaginal discharge with excessive use of cleaning soap. The following is an excerpt from an in-depth interview with the main informant:

"...How about it sis, I'm already in the habit of using soap every day for my intimate organs, so I use it the same way I do when I shower, if I don't get soap it doesn't taste good because it's already a habit..." (IU 4, 29 Years)

Most of the key informants had knowledge that wearing tight underwear can cause vaginal discharge. As quoted from an interview with one of the following informants:

"...Usually the panties are made of cotton, the material isn't too tight miss, it's nice

anyway miss, if you don't wear cotton it's not comfortable, like when it's sweaty it seems like it can seep in, it's not good if you wear something like a t-shirt ..." (IU 28 Years)

A small number of key informants had insufficient knowledge of the causes of wearing tight underwear which could cause vaginal discharge. As an excerpt from an interview with one of the main informants follows:

"... If it's not tight, it won't be comfortable for me miss, is it because I'm used to it..." (IU 2, 28 years)

Most of the main informants had knowledge about the causes of infection originating from the female genitalia which can cause vaginal discharge. As the following interview excerpt says:

"...Oiyaa sis, if you have vaginal discharge, for example, if you feel itchy, if you scratch it over time it will cause an infection in the genitals, it's best to treat it immediately..." (IU 6) , 37 Years)

The same thing was also expressed by additional informants (IT 1 and IT 4) and supports the statement from (IU 6), as in the following quote:

"...the form of my concern is like this sis, if you have vaginal discharge, be careful to treat it quickly, if you don't treat it quickly, you're afraid that it won't heal, instead it will become an infection in the genitals..." (IT 4, 35 years)

A small number of key informants had insufficient knowledge about the causes of infection originating from the genitals which could cause vaginal discharge. As quoted results interview with one of the following key informants:

"...It's not certain that an infection in the genitals causes leucorrhea, but there are other diseases like it can cause cancer..." (IU 2, 28 years)

The statement from the main informant (IU 2) is in line with the statement from the informant addition (IT 2) which revealed that:

"...My wife has never complained to me about vaginal discharge, miss, I'm a person who is rarely at home, I live as a fisherman so I don't know much, I know that if you have menstruation it will definitely hurt, if you have vaginal discharge I don't know about this at all sis, like the side effects and the causes don't know either..." (IT 2, 35 years)

Most of the main informants had knowledge of the causes of stress in women which is one of the causes of vaginal discharge. As an excerpt from an in-depth interview with one of the following main informants:

"...I once, sis, when I was stressed, my anxious thoughts were vaginal discharge, for about 1 week it didn't go away, the problem was I didn't know that stress could cause vaginal discharge, instead my menstruation became It didn't go well at that time sis, then I checked with the health center, sis, asked the midwife, it turned out that my mind was messed up sis..." (IU 5, 30 years)

The results of these statements are supported by the results of in-depth interviews with informants Key (IK). As an excerpt from an in-depth interview with the following key informant:

"...Usually I provide counseling in the family planning room with women who control contraception, right? I also say that the causes of vaginal discharge are very many, yes, including living and clean behavior, then how to take care

of the intimate organs, such as using soap, is not recommended too often, stress can also cause vaginal discharge, it can even become abnormal vaginal discharge because his physical condition is not stable..." (IK, 58 years)

A small number of key informants had insufficient knowledge regarding the causes of stress that can cause vaginal discharge. As quoted from an interview with one of the following key informants:

"...It's different, sis, in my opinion, well, doesn't it have any effect, sis, when you're stressed, you'll definitely have a problem, then if vaginal discharge looks like it's coming out on its own, miss, it's usually affected right before your period is the same afterward... (IU 4, 29 Years)

All of the main informants had the same knowledge regarding the causes of vaginal discharge, namely the bacteria that infects the genitals, *candida sp.*, often underestimates the cleanliness of the genitals and the environment, often exchanges underwear and towels with other people, and uses *pantyliners* that are rarely changed. As an excerpt from an interview with one of the main informants follows:

"...I used to have vaginal discharge that wasn't as usual, I didn't know if it was mushroom, I thought it was because my underwear was dirty, sometimes when I was drying the clothes something would fall off, right? Ma'am, I thought that because of that my underwear kept getting dirty, but apparently not, so I told the midwife to check it because it didn't heal, sis, it kept coming out..." (IU 7, 28 years)

Knowledge of Signs and Symptoms of Leucorrhea

The results of the study showed that all key informants had the same knowledge regarding the signs and symptoms of normal vaginal discharge which are odorless, non-itchy, colorless, and abnormal vaginal discharge which is smelly and itchy. As an excerpt from an interview with one of the main informants below:

"...That's miss, in my opinion, vaginal discharge that often comes out is usually clear in color, doesn't smell, then if it's a bit yellow in color the liquid is really thick miss, smells bad, then feels itchy..." (IU 3, 25 Years Old)

The statement from the main informant (IU 3) is in line with the statement from the informant addition (IT 4) which revealed that:

"...The concern that I give to my friend is to be careful about leucorrhea, don't let it go untreated, I'm afraid that vaginal discharge which at that time meant that it was not normal could happen again sis, the problem is besides my friend, I also experienced it, sis, it's really uncomfortable, miss, like if you want to move, it's not comfortable, wes, it's uncomfortable, sis..." (IT 4, 36 years)

Most of the main informants had knowledge that signs and symptoms such as irritation, burning sensation, itching and pain felt in the genitals and thighs were signs and symptoms of abnormal vaginal discharge. As quoted from an in-depth interview with some of the main informants are as follows:

"...Yeah, you know, that's true, because I've had something like that before, but yeah, I didn't drink herbal medicine right away, just boiled betel leaves to clean it, so it doesn't itch like that..." (IU 4, 29 Years)

While only 1 main informant had less knowledge about these signs and symptoms,

this was due to a lack of sources of information obtained by the main informant regarding signs and symptomsthat could cause vaginal discharge so that the informant concluded that he had never experienced abnormal vaginal discharge. As an excerpt from an interview with the main informant follows:

"...I don't understand miss, because I usually have normal vaginal discharge that doesn't go like that, it might get dirt or insect fluids when drying my underwear, that could happen miss, it doesn't immediately cause leucorrhea too..." (IU 2, 28 Years)

All key informants had the same knowledge regarding the signs and symptoms of vaginaldischarge, including discharge or mucus from the genitals and vaginal discharge around the menstrual period. As the following in-depth interview excerpt:

"...By coincidence, I have vaginal discharge, sis, yesterday before menstruation, vaginaldischarge, this is the vaginal discharge after menstruation..." (IU 7, 28 years)

All key informants had knowledge regarding the signs and symptoms which included burningand painful urination, which are signs of abnormal vaginal discharge. As an excerpt from the interview with the main informant:

"...Yes, sis, it's true, I did, I didn't think I had bladder stones, how come it really hurts like painin the stomach and on the genitals it hurts at that time miss, it turns out to be vaginal discharge, the problem is when it comes out The leucorrhea doesn't hurt anymore..." (IU6, 37 years)

A small number of key informants had less knowledge of the signs and symptoms the. As the following interview excerpts with key informants:

"...I've never had pain, miss, miss, usually it's itchy vaginal discharge again, the itching is strong as if it's gone like that miss, wow I can'tstand it when it's like that wes hehehe..." (IU 2, 28 years)

Knowledge of Prevention of Leucorrhea

All key informants had the same knowledge regarding the prevention of leucorrhea whichcan be prevented by clean and healt lifestyle and by maintaining genital hygiene. As the following interview excerpt:

"...Wow, if it's just from us, if we don't clean it, the effect will be dangerous, sis even if it's that bad, it will affect the vaginal discharge, we have to be careful with personal hygiene..." (IU7, 28 Years)

The statement of the main informant is in line with the statement of the additional informant(IT) who revealed that:

"...Yes, you care if you have a complaint, both of you remind each other to provide a solution, especially when it comes to leucorrhea, miss, once a month it comes out, if we are not good at keeping ourselves clean, it's also dangerous, daily hygiene is also like that sis, we have to live a healthy life so that we and the people aroundus don't feel like a loss hehehe..." (IT 4, 26 Years)

Most of the main informants know how to prevent leucorrhea, namely hanging underwearfrequently, wich is on may to prevented leucorrhea. The main informant changed his underwear 2-4 times a day. As quoted from the results of in-depth interviews with the

following key informants:

"...Change me for sure sis, at least 2-3 a day, that's if you don't wear wet underwear, if you bash it back and forth, miss, it's not good it makes it moist..."
(IU 7, 28 Year)

A small number of key informants did not have knowledge about preventing leucorrhea, that is, changing underwear frequently is one way to prevent leucorrhea. Because the main informants said that the underwear they used was clean and sometimes they were lazy to change their underwear. As quoted from an interview with one of the following key informants:

"...I change my underwear once a day sis, change every afternoon I take a shower, so in the morning I put it on again, because if I don't go out anywhere, it doesn't work either..." (IU2, 28 years)

DISCUSSION

It was shown that the main informants were 25-37 years old. Most of the main informants aged 25-29 years understood *personal hygiene* behavior in preventing leucorrhea including cleaning the genitals when urinating and defecating, using genital cleaning soap, using pantyliners, using drugs or herbs, using underwear and materials used, as well as the physical condition of the water used to wash the female area and underwear.

It can be seen that data on vaginal discharge examination results in women of childbearing age whose contraception at the Kedungrejo Health Center, Muncar District, shows that most women of childbearing age experience normal vaginal discharge, while a small proportion of women of childbearing age experience abnormal vaginal discharge. Age is also a demographic variable that influences one's perception and knowledge. As a person ages, there will be changes in the physical and psychological (mental) aspects. The increasing age of women of childbearing age who have less knowledge causes high levels of vaginal discharge (Irna Trisnawati, 2021:46).

The results showed that most of the main informants had the last educational status, namely SMA (High School) and a small number of the main informants had the last educational status, namely Junior High School (SMP). The lack of education level made the main informants lack understanding regarding *personal hygiene* behavior in preventing leucorrhea. The higher the level of education, the higher the level of knowledge, skills and abilities a person has (BP et al., 2022:2).

The results of the study showed that most of the key informants worked as self-employed. Meanwhile, a small number of key informants worked as housewives (IRT). Job status is a *title, brand*, or title attached to someone who does work according to their capacity and expertise (Hendajay, 2020:135-136).

Based on the leucorrhea level, the results showed that most of the main informants experienced normal vaginal discharge which was characterized by clear white mucus discharge for 3-4 days. A small proportion experience abnormal vaginal

discharge marked by a thick greenish-yellow discharge accompanied by itching, an unpleasant odor, the vaginal discharge begins before or after menstruation for 1-2 weeks. In addition, there were informants who did not experience vaginal discharge during the interview. Leucorrhea is an excessive discharge from the vaginal canal which is sometimes accompanied by itching, pain, burning sensation on the lips of the genitals, often accompanied by an odor and causing pain when urinating or intercourse which is a discharge that is not blood (Shalma, 2020:5).

METHODS OF TREATMENT

Based on the results of the study, it was shown that most of the main informants chose to use traditional methods of treatment, namely by boiling betel leaves used to wash the genitals and drinking it mixed with other spices such as turmeric, honey, cinnamon and lemongrass. In addition to consuming traditional herbal medicine that is sold in the market to cure and prevent leucorrhea, namely key herbs.

A small number chose to use medical treatment methods by checking at the Puskesmas and buying leucorrhea at the pharmacy, and there were key informants who had never used traditional or medical methods of treatment because they were not used to taking herbs/medicine during vaginal discharge. Medicine in Indonesia recognizes two systems of treatment, namely medical treatment and traditional medicine. Medical treatment is treatment using drugs, carried out by personnel who have received formal health education by using methods, tools or materials that have received medical/medical standards. Traditional medicine is treatment that is carried out traditionally, passed down from generation to generation, based on ancestral recipes, customs, beliefs or local habits, both *magical* and traditional knowledge (Togobu, 2018:16).

KNOWLEDGE OF WOMEN OF REPRODUCTIVE AGE REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF LEUCORRHEA

It shows that the main informant has knowledge regarding the notion of *personal hygiene* in preventing leucorrhea because it often occurs before menstruation and after menstruation. Normal (physiological) vaginal discharge occurs before menstruation due to the influence of the menstrual process which involves the hormones estrogen and progesterone, around the secretory phase between days 10-16 of menstruation (Sukamto *et al.*, 2018:114).

It is in accordance with research which states that women in Indonesia lack knowledge about vaginal discharge so they perceive vaginal discharge as a common and trivial thing, besides that the feeling of embarrassment when experiencing vaginal discharge often makes women reluctant to consult health workers (Citrawati *et al.*, 2019:74)

KNOWLEDGE OF THE CAUSES OF LEUCORRHEA

Water to wash the vagina can reduce pathological (abnormal) and physiological (normal) vaginal discharge. Betel leaves contain essential oils consisting of *betiphenol*, *kavikol*, *sesquiterpenes*, *hydroxycavicol*, *cavibetol*, *estragol*, *eugenol*, and *karvikol*, and tannins. Youngbetel leaves contain more *diastase enzymes*, sugars, and essential oils than old betel leaves. The *Eugenol* compound in betel leaves has been shown to kill the *Candida albicans* fungus that causes vaginal discharge, while tannins are astringents that reduce fluid secretion in the vaginal canal (Baety., 2019:49-50).

Feminine cleansers generally contain many chemical compounds such as *petroleum*, *synthetic chemicals*, and *petrochemicals (harmful chemicals)* which can damage the skin and the environment. If you use soap continuously, it will further erode the *doderlein* bacteria (good bacteria) and other bacteria, the easier it will be for them to enter the vaginal canal. If this happens frequently, it can cause pelvic inflammation, genital infections and even one of the triggers for cervical cancer. Cleaning the intimate organs should use soft soap with a *pH* of 3.5 such as baby soap which is usually pH neutral and avoid using vaginal douches/cleaning fluids because they can change the pH in the vagina (Shanti, 2018:29).

Cotton underwear can absorb moisture and provide free air circulation to the genital area. A moist vaginal area can increase the risk of infection. It is expected not to use tight underwear (Permata, 2019:56). High humidity causes the female area to become hot which can cause irritation of the female organs so that bacteria easily multiply. Irritation of the vagina will make it easier for bacteria to enter the vagina which causes pathological vaginal discharge (Sari, 2019:56). Tight pants or jeans can be damp and cause irritation. Apart from that, stop using perfume or soap, deodorant, bubble bath and colored wipes. These products contain chemicals that irritate the female area and external genitalia (Ambarsari, 2022:8-9).

Vaginal discharge needs special attention for public health because of the high burden of reproduction, morbidity of pregnancy, infertility, increasing susceptibility to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) including the double transmission of HIV. Lack of knowledge or information about the causes of vaginal discharge can be influenced by the lack of willingness of women of childbearing age to consult with health workers regarding vaginal discharge (Rohmah, 2018:30-31). It can be concluded that knowledge of infections that can cause vaginal discharge varies widely, this can be influenced by educational, environmental, and other factors (Utami, 2021:10-11).

As a result, women are also susceptible to fungal and bacterial infections that cause abnormal vaginal discharge (Aprianti *et al.*, 2020:2) It is important for women to know about leucorrhea so that women know about leucorrhea, signs and symptoms of leucorrhea, causes, and can distinguish between physiological and pathological leucorrhea so that women can prevent, treat and immediately carry out examinations if there are signs and symptoms of abnormal vaginal discharge (Melina & Fitria., 2021:6)

Routine maintenance of reproductive organs such as cleaning with water and doing

the correct wiping is from front to back. In caring for the genitals, it is recommended to rinse and rub the vaginal area thoroughly, especially after urinating. This is intended to prevent residual urine or other feces from remaining. After that, dry it using a tissue or small towel (Laila, 2020:117).

KNOWLEDGE OF SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF LEUCORRHEA

Vaginal discharge is a common problem in women. Most women do not know about vaginal discharge and the causes of vaginal discharge. If not handled properly, vaginal discharge can be fatal, infertility and ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the womb) this is one of the results of vaginal discharge. Pathological vaginal discharge occurs with bacterial, fungal, viral infections, then reactions occur due to the use of chemicals such as using vaginal washes or using pads that are too long and vaginal discharge tends to smell foul, green in color and sometimes accompanied by itching (Oriza, 2018:143). Pathological (abnormal) vaginal discharge is characterized by a large amount of discharge, white like stale milk, yellow or greenish, itchy, sore, and accompanied by a fishy or rotten odor (Salamah *et al.*, 2020:8).

Culture is influenced by ways of socializing, thinking and habits that can influence a person's acquisition of knowledge. Someone who has good and sustainable sources of information will have high knowledge (Melina & Fitria., 2021:6). Normal vaginal discharge is colorless, odorless, does not cause itching and is influenced by hormones that usually come out before and after menstruation, between days 10-16 of the menstrual cycle, besides that it can come out when aroused, pregnant, exhausted, stressed, and taking hormonal drugs such as birth control pills (Regita, 2021:687). Abnormal vaginal discharge is characterized by a large amount of discharge, white like stale milk, yellow or greenish, itchy, sore, smells fishy or rotten, and is accompanied by pain when urinating (Salamah *et al.*, 2020:8).

Abnormal vaginal discharge occurs when women start to complain because their vagina secretes too much mucus accompanied by a fishy smell, feels sore when urinating, and sometimes accompanied by a feeling of heat and itching, the amount is very large, colored, smelly, and accompanied by complaints such as itching, swelling, burning and burning when urinating, and pain in the lower abdomen (Regita, 2021:19).

KNOWLEDGE OF PREVENTION OF LEUCORRHEA

The correct behavior in preventing leucorrhea is washing from front to back, using underwear that absorbs sweat, keeping the female organs clean and maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Irna Trisnawati, 2021:41). Specifically someone will act and will continue to maintain the results to be achieved through good values and for good results, thus that person must also have good information and knowledge (Citrawati *et al.*, 2019:77). Washing the female organs in the wrong direction, i.e. washing from the back to the front can cause bacteria to enter the reproductive organs. The reproductive organs can be exposed to a type of fungus or lice which can cause itching or discomfort if they are not kept clean (28).

Underwear must be changed at least 2 times a day so that dirt does not enter the vagina. Panties that are not replaced can cause the vagina to become moist, thereby increasing the risk growth of fungi and bacteria. Underpants are not used interchangeably because they can transfer the agent that causes vaginal discharge as a result of moving from 1 person to another (Cahyaningtyas, 2019:218).

The frequency of changing underwear less than 2 times a day can increase the risk of developing vaginal candidiasis 3.532 times greater than changing underwear 2 or more times per day. Moist vaginal conditions can stimulate the growth of *candida* or facilitate the growth of yeast. The presence of excess fungus will cause vaginal odor and itching (Setiawan, 2018:10).

CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion of this study is that most of the main informants, namely women of childbearing age, know the *personal hygiene* behavior of women of childbearing age in preventing leucorrhea in the Muncar coastal area, Banyuwangi Regency, including the meaning of leucorrhea, causes of leucorrhea, signs and symptoms of leucorrhea, and prevention of leucorrhea.

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