



REVIEW

Conventional and Alternative Management of Dysmenorrhea - A Narrative Review

Nnaji AC and Ijomone OR.

Department of Clinical Pharmacy & Biopharmacy, Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria.

Address for correspondence:

Mr. Augustine C. Nnaji
Department of Clinical Pharmacy & Biopharmacy,
Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Lagos, Lagos,
Nigeria.
Email: saintaustyno@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Dysmenorrhea also known as painful menstruation is a public health problem with high prevalence among adolescents. It is defined as a severe, painful, cramping sensation within the lower abdomen occurring just before, during or few days after menstruation starts. Dysmenorrhea can negatively affect a woman's quality of life and interfere with daily activities. The two categories of dysmenorrhea are primary and secondary. Dysmenorrhea occurring in the absence of any pathological condition of the pelvis is known as primary dysmenorrhea while dysmenorrhea occurring in the presence of pathological condition of the pelvis is called secondary dysmenorrhea.

Aim of review: The purpose of this review is to present a general overview of the types, epidemiology, diagnosis and available treatment options of both primary and secondary dysmenorrhea.

Methods: PubMed, Google Scholar and Medline search engines (2000 to 2021) were used to conduct searches of relevant articles on dysmenorrhea. Citation lists of publications, including studies for randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and review articles were searched.

Conclusion: Although prevalence is difficult to determine, dysmenorrhea may affect as high as 90% of menstruating women. Risk factors for dysmenorrhea may include smoking, early menarche, nulliparity, and family history. Analgesics and oral contraceptives are the mainstay of treatment for primary dysmenorrhea. Complementary and alternative treatments options such as herbal medicines, exercise and diet are also available. Addressing the underlying pathology of secondary dysmenorrhea is the main stay for its management.

Keywords: Management of Dysmenorrhea, Menstruation, Non-Steroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), Oral contraceptives (OCS), Complementary and alternative treatment