



MLE REPORT STUDENTS

MENSTRUAL EQUALITY IN CAMBODIA:

*Evaluation on Puberty and
Menstrual Health Teacher Training
and Education for Students
Second-Year Project*



DAYS FOR GIRLS

Client: Days for Girls (DfG)
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Research Background & Objectives

Following a successful pilot project in 2022, DfGI and CRESO have an MOU agreement with the MoEYS, for a multi-year menstrual health project between 2023-2025 to increase access to timely, accurate, well-delivered, age and culturally appropriate puberty and menstrual health education and menstrual products for 15,000 students and 600 teachers in Phnom Penh, Ratanakiri, Mondulakiri, Kratie, and Kampong Som Provinces, Cambodia.

DfG commissioned Indochina Research to conduct an MLE assessment to understand the impact of the teacher training on the teachers and the primary and secondary school lessons on the students during the second year of the project.



Research Background & Objectives

STUDENTS

- To assess and measure changes (if any) to students' knowledge of menstruation and puberty.
- To assess and measure changes (if any) in students' attitudes about puberty and menstruation.
- To assess and measure changes (if any) in students' confidence in discussing puberty and menstruation with others.
- To assess and measure changes (if any) in female students' menstrual experience (as it pertains to access and use of menstrual products, including DfG washable pad Kits).



Quantitative method

A Mixed methods approach was employed to collect primary quantitative and qualitative information.

Qualitative method

Area Coverage

Ratanakiri Province

Respondent Criteria

- Occupation: Students
- Grade: Primary & Secondary
- Gender: Male & Female

Fieldwork date

Pre-test & Post test | May–November 2024

2

Research Design

Method:

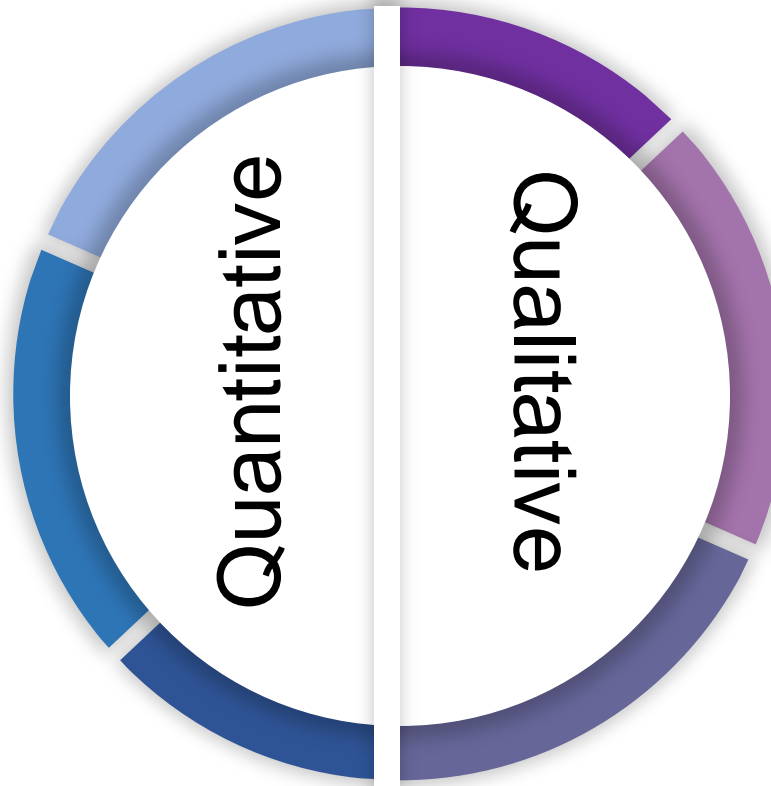
- Face-to-face, paper-based self-completion structured questionnaire in Khmer language using SurveyToGo as the survey software for data entry after completion.
- Purposive random sampling was employed to select the target respondents.

Sampling Frame:

- All students of grade 5, grade 6 & grade 8-10 in the selected schools were invited to join the survey.

Sample Size:

- Primary level
 - + School = n3
 - + Student = n200
- Secondary level
 - + School = n18
 - + Student = n1,338



Method:

- Offline Face-to-Face, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with students.
- Interviews are audio-taped and moderated by an experienced Khmer moderator.
- Respondent selection was via purposive/convenience sampling.

Sampling Frame:

- Students of grade 8-10 in the selected schools were invited to join the study.

Sample Size:

- Secondary level
 - + FGDs= 6 groups (3 groups of males and 3 groups of females)

3

Research Findings

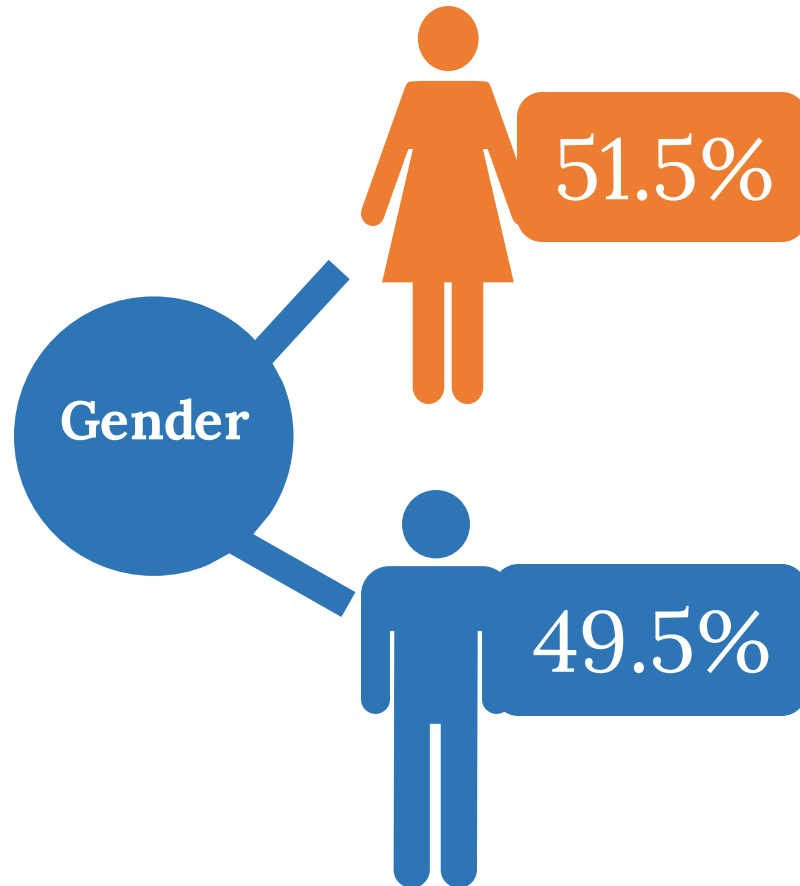


QUANTITATIVE

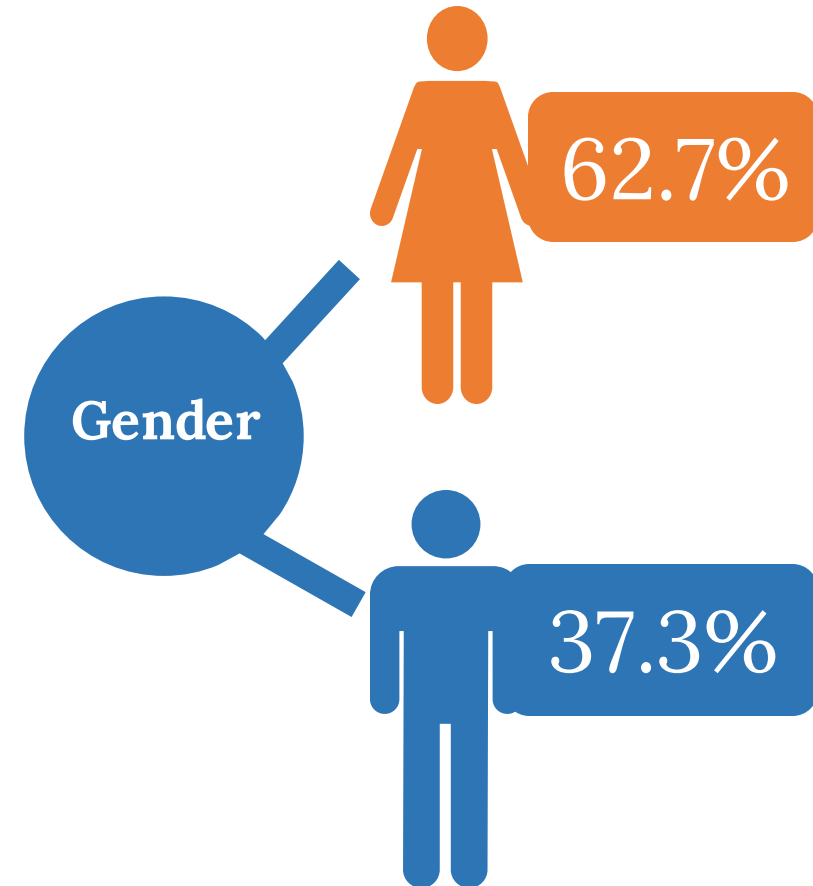
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338)

PRIMARY SCHOOL



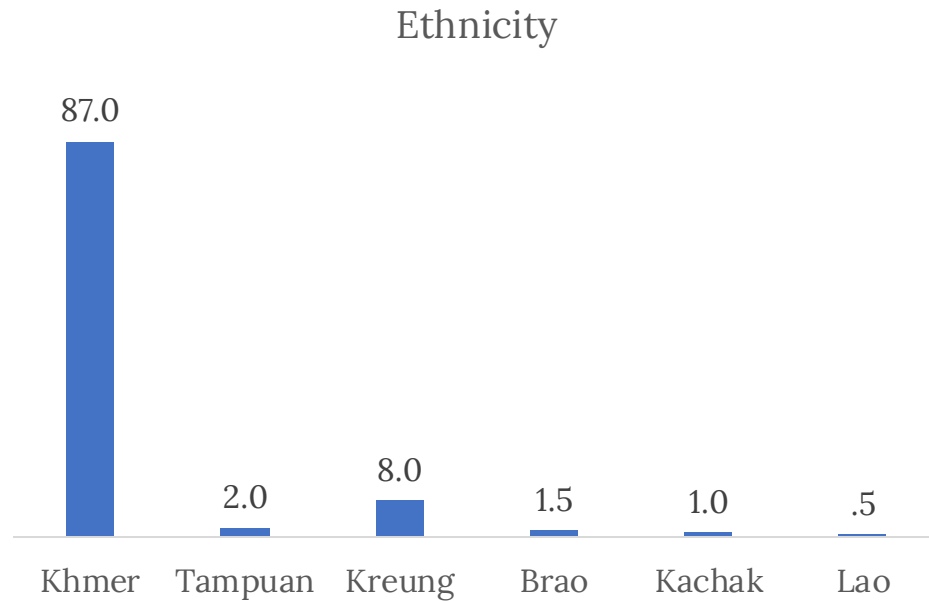
SECONDARY SCHOOL



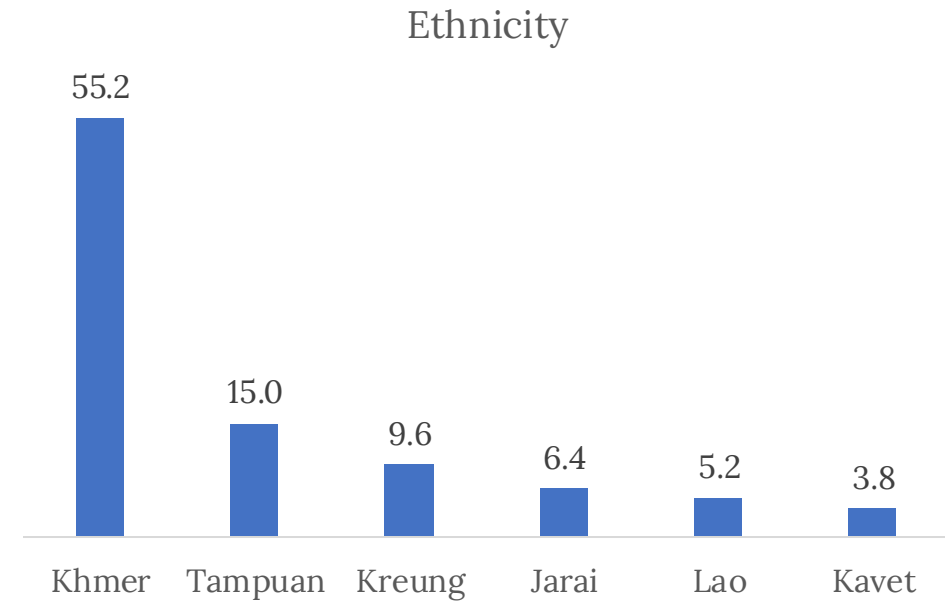
PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

PRIMARY SCHOOL



SECONDARY SCHOOL



There are more female students in both secondary (62.7%) and primary school (51.5%). Most of them are Khmer (55.2% in secondary school and 87.0% in primary school) and range in age from 9 to 21 years old.

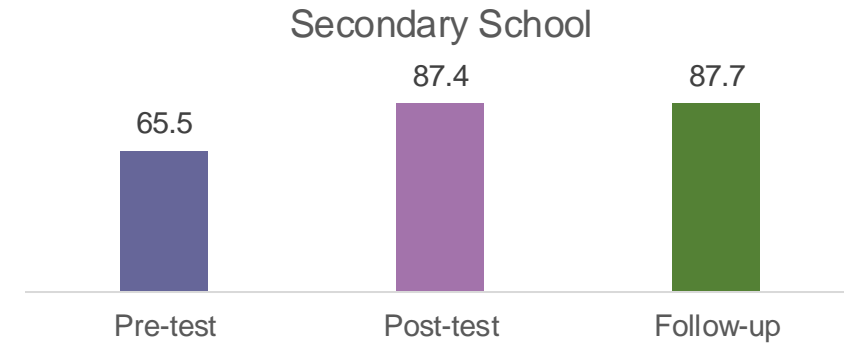
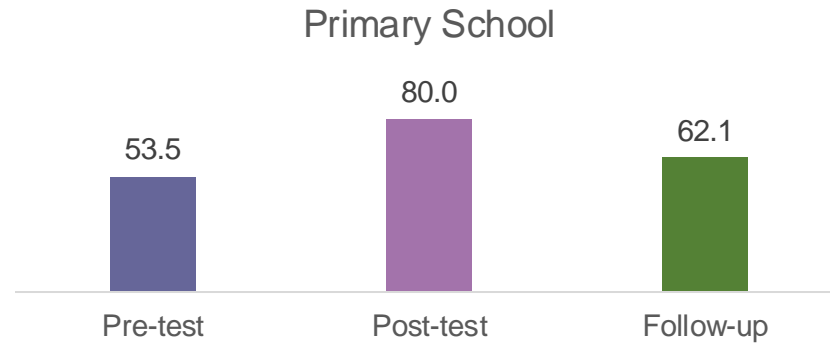
KNOWLEDGE



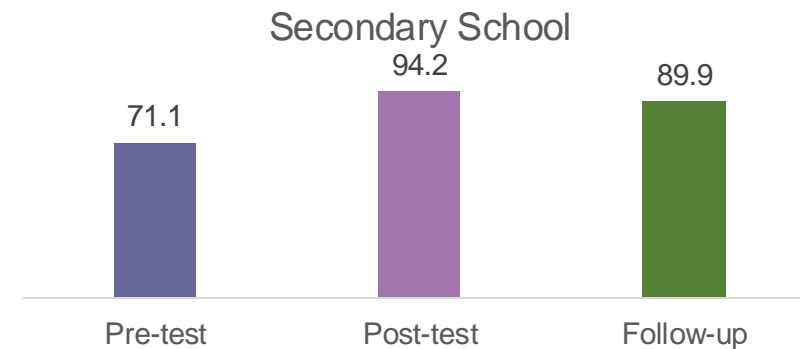
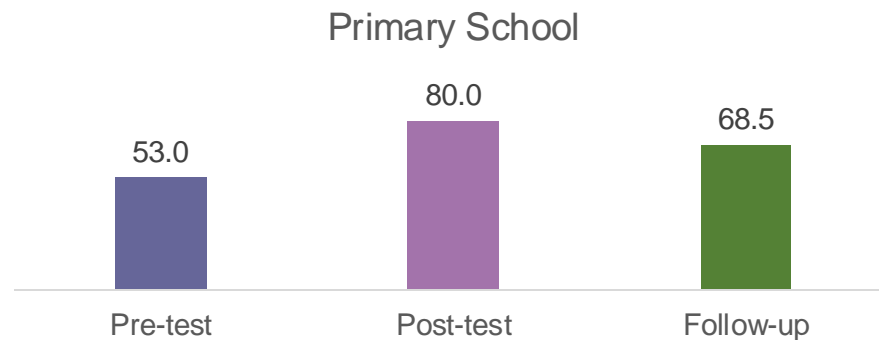
MEANING OF PUBERTY & MENSTRUATION

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

Puberty is the changes that girls and boys experience as girls start to grow into women and boys grow into men.



Menstruation is the shedding of the lining of the uterus each month



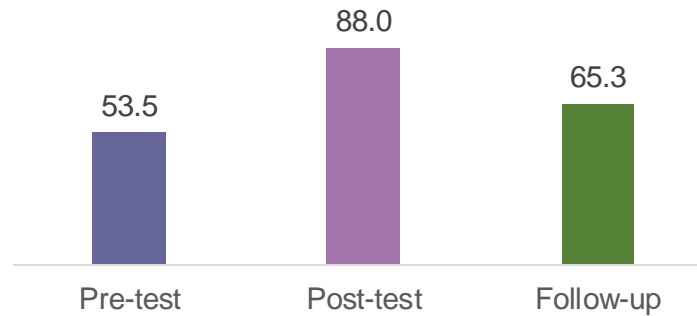
AVERAGE AGE THAT GIRL AND BOY START MENSTRUATION/PUBERTY

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

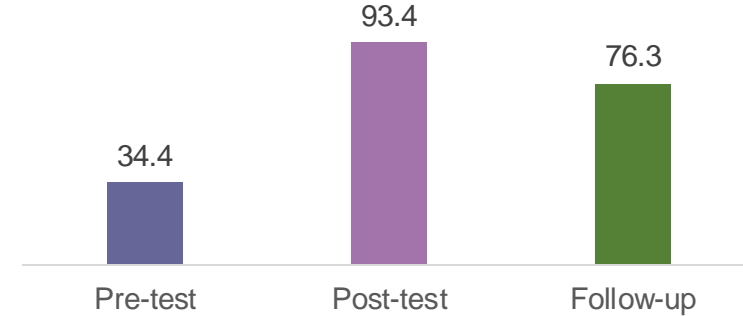


8-16 years old

Primary School

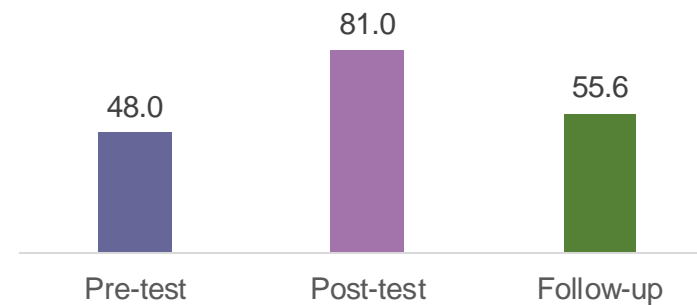


Secondary School

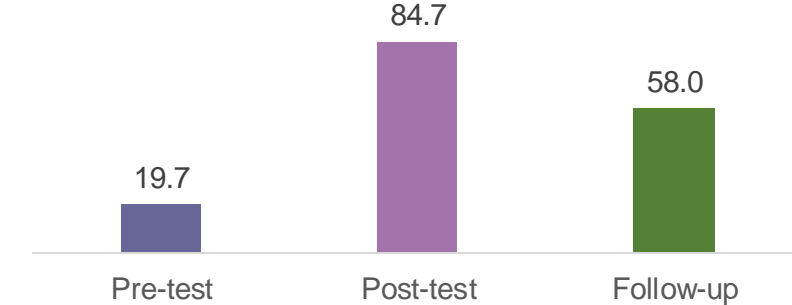


9-14 years old

Primary School



Secondary School



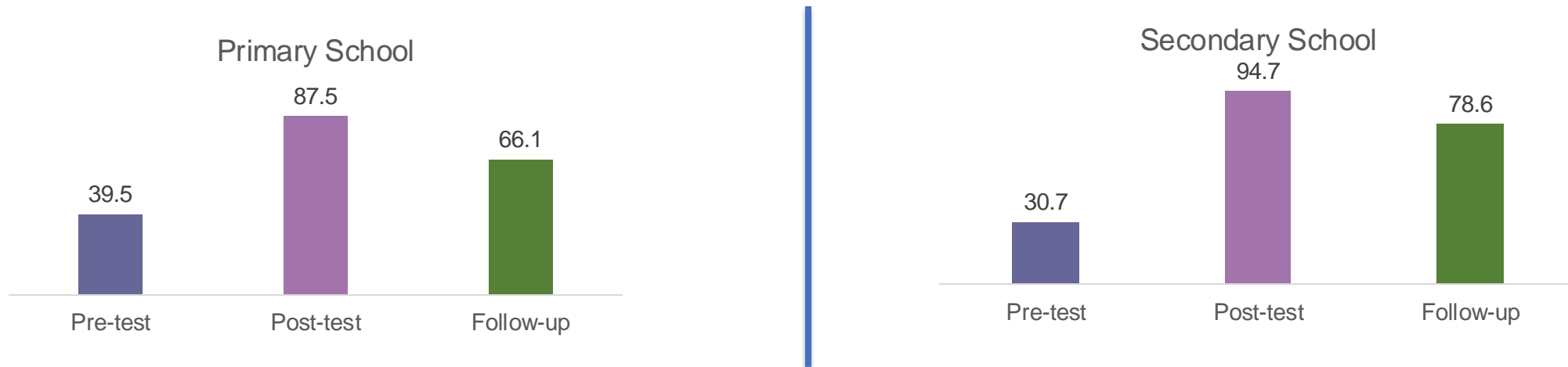
THE AVERAGE PERIOD USUALLY LASTS & AVERAGE MENSTRUAL CYCLE DURATION

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

The average period usually lasts is **3-5 Days**



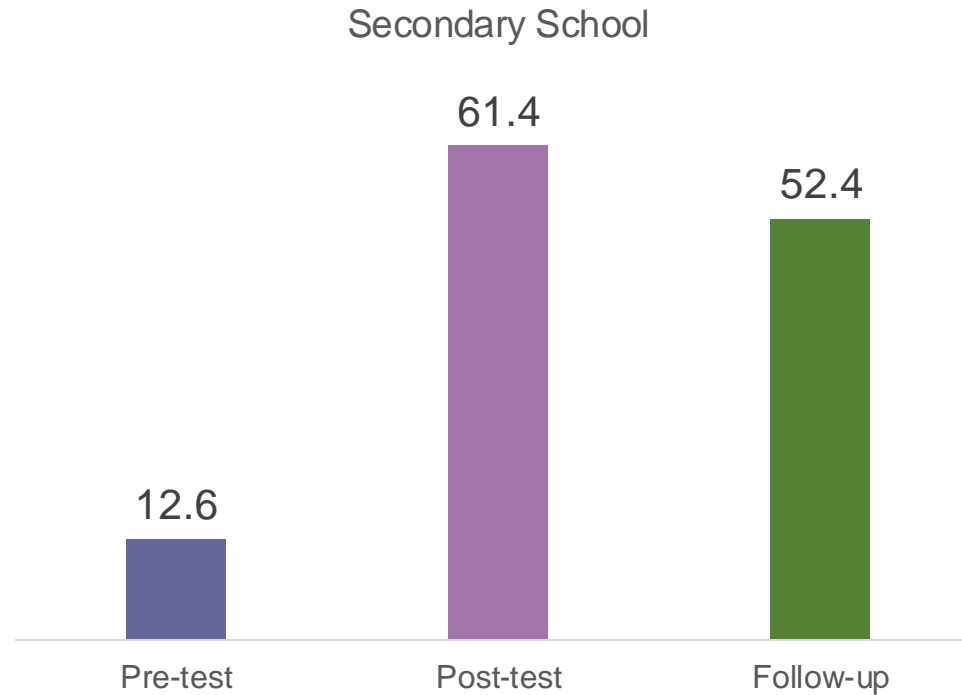
The average menstrual cycle duration **28 Days**



THE DAYS OF MENSTRUATION CYCLE ARE WOMEN MOST LIKELY TO GET PREGNANT IF SHE HAS SEXUAL

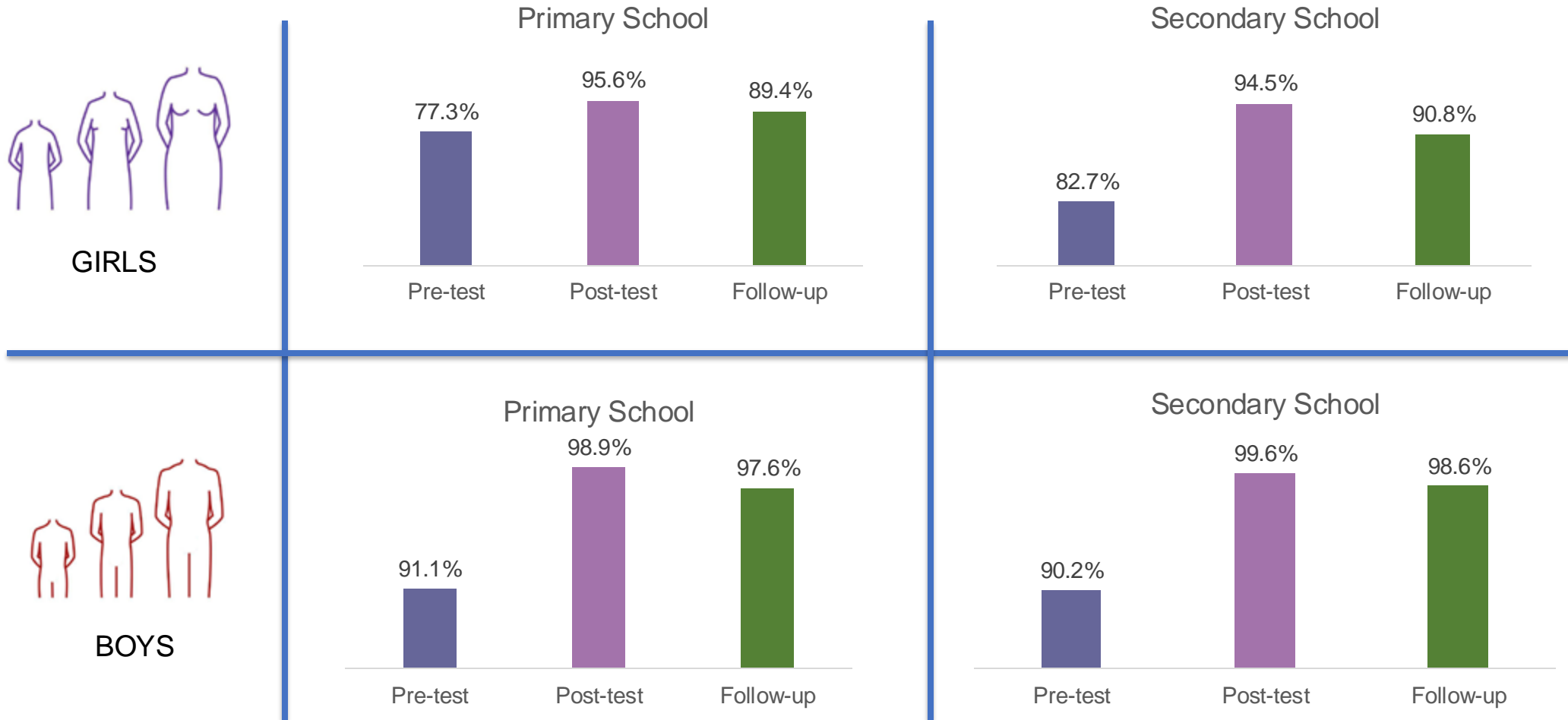
Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

The days of the menstrual cycle are women most likely to get pregnant if she has sexual intercourse (**Day 10-17**)



CHANGES THAT BOYS, GIRLS EXPERIENCE

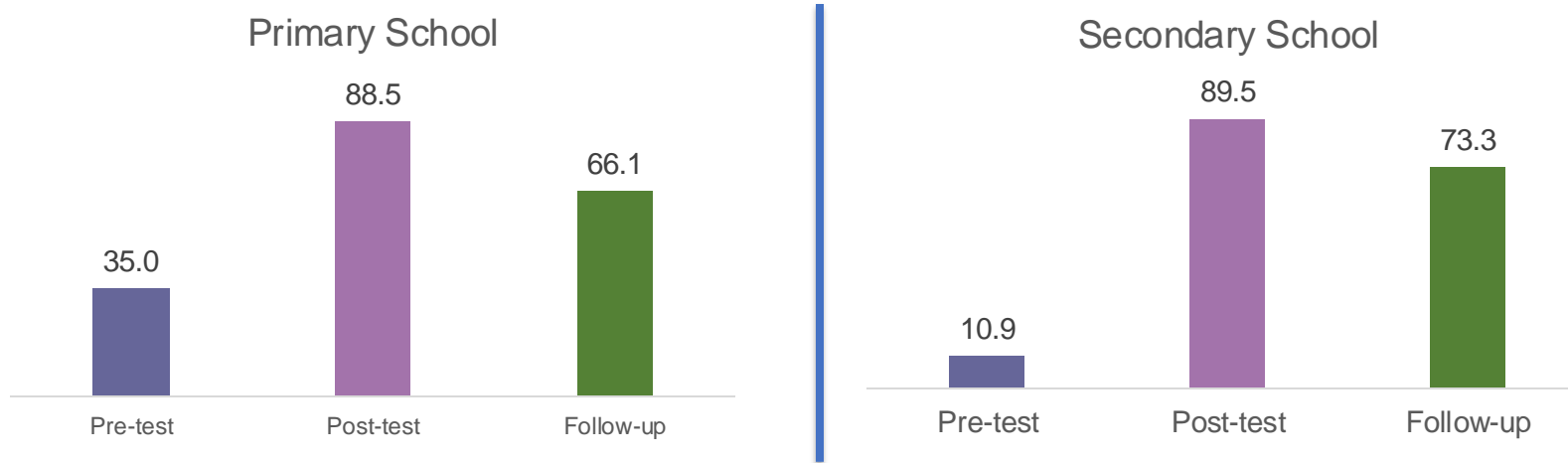
Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %



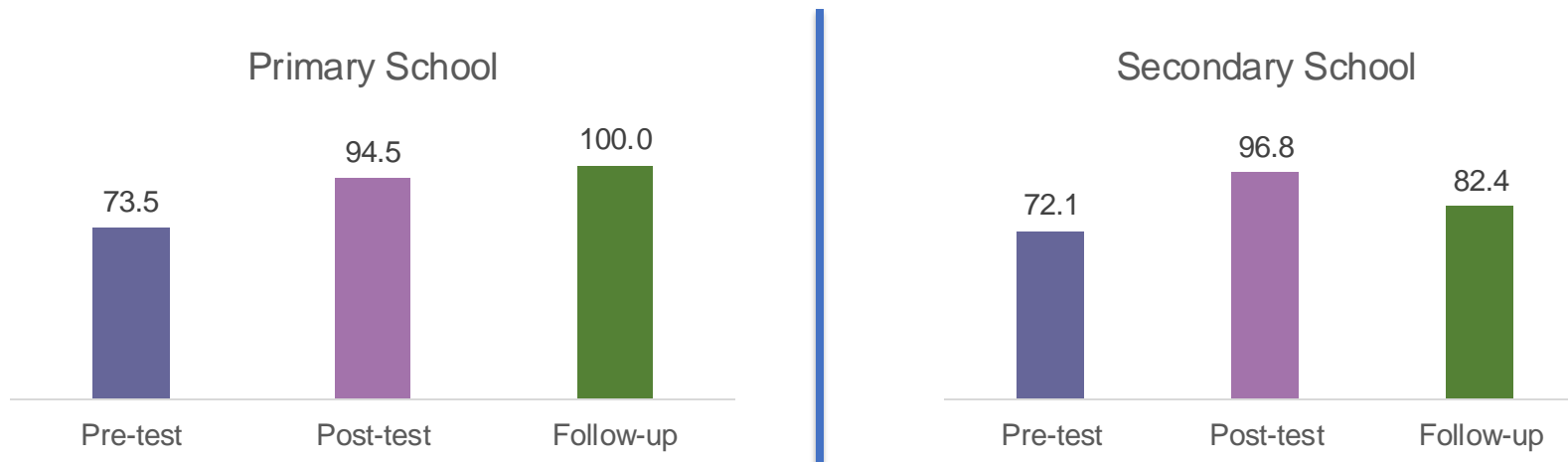
NUMBER OF HOLES A FEMALE HAS IN HER GENITAL AREA; MENSTRUATION IS A HEALTHY SIGN; PEOPLE GIRLS CAN TELL

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

A girl has **three holes** in her in genital area



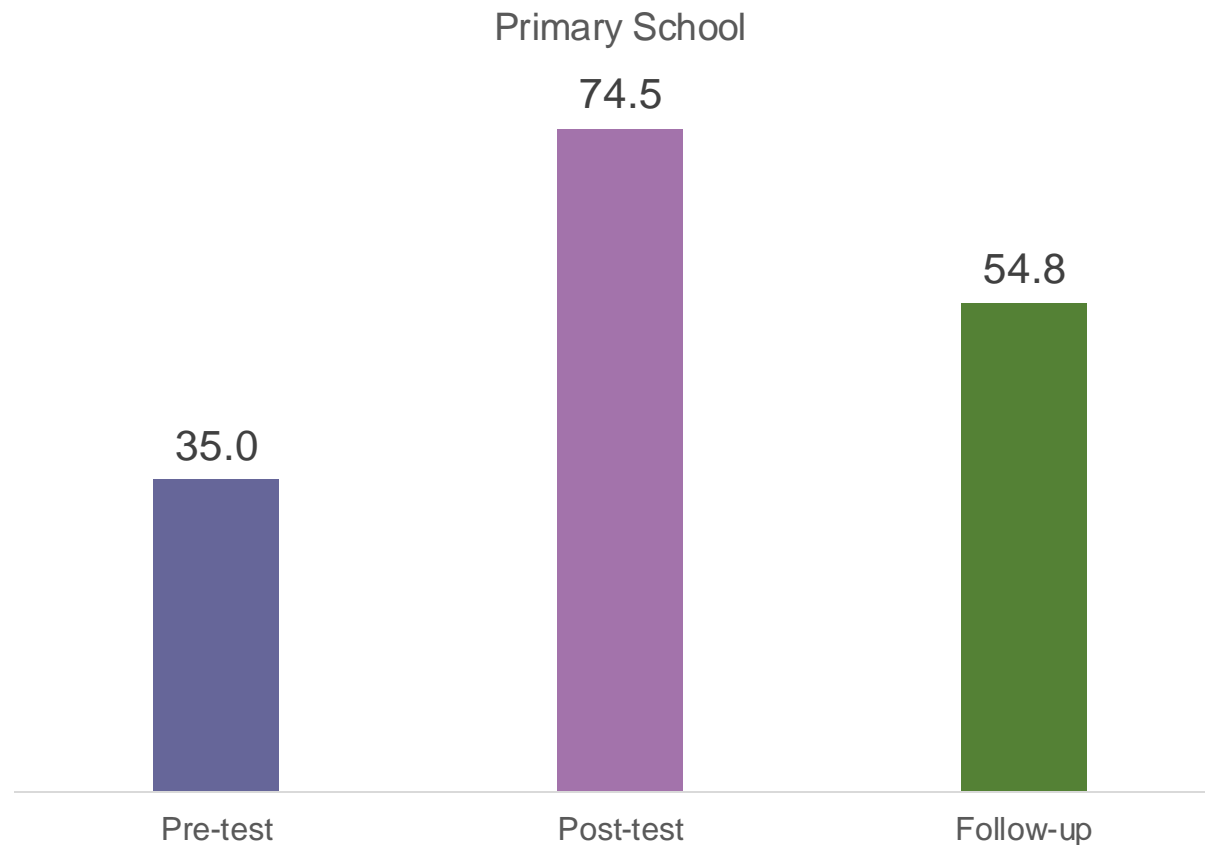
It is **true** that menstruation is a natural sign of being a healthy woman.



NUMBER OF HOLES A FEMALE HAS IN HER GENITAL AREA; MENSTRUATION IS A HEALTHY SIGN; PEOPLE GIRLS CAN TELL

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

Girls can **tell anyone they want** when they get their period, as **it is their choice**.



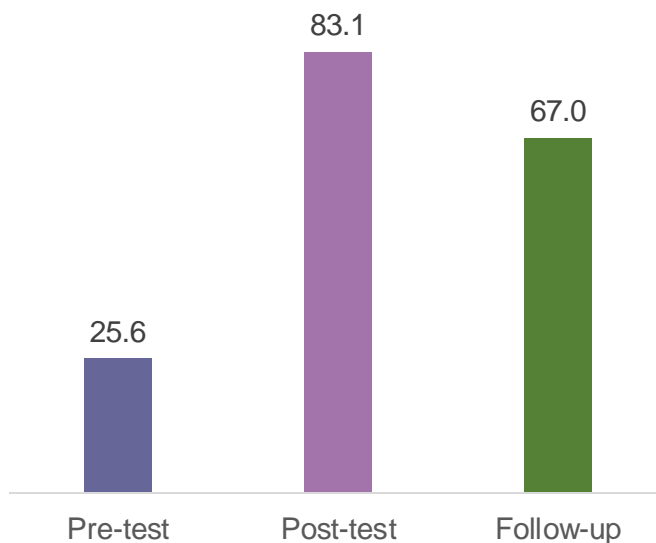
DEFINITION OF UTERUS, OVARIES, VAGINA

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

UTERUS

The Uterus is a very strong muscle approximately the size of a fist that can expand large enough to hold a full-term baby and is strong enough to push that baby out through the vaginal canal to give birth.

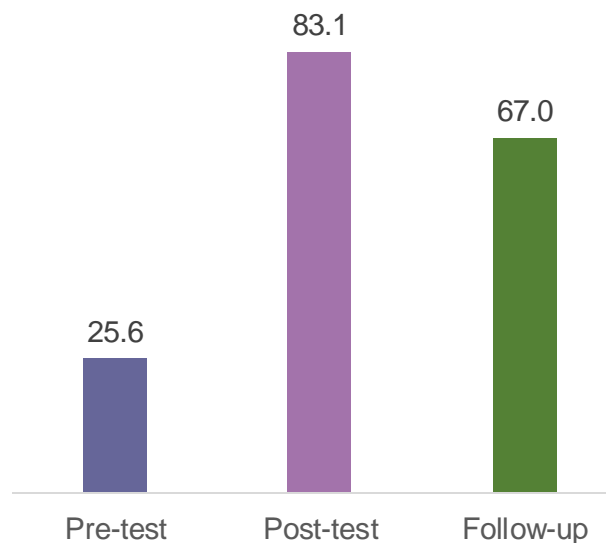
Secondary School



OVARIES

Ovaries hold thousands of tiny eggs inside. Each month, one prepares and releases one egg. The next month the other prepares and releases an egg.

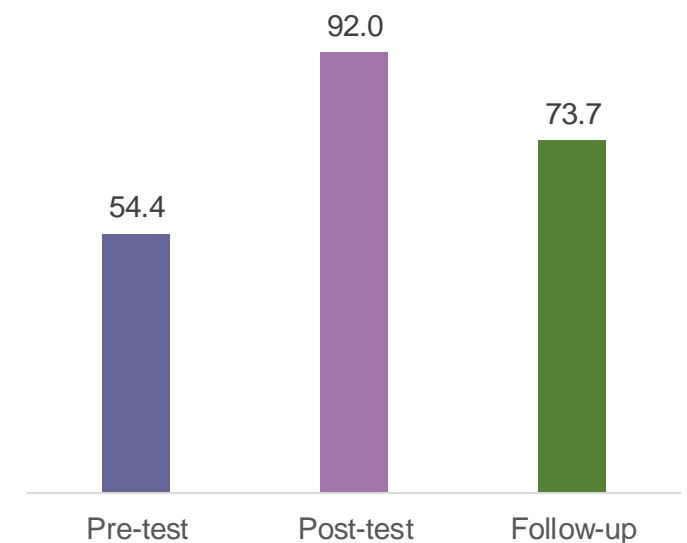
Secondary School



VAGINA

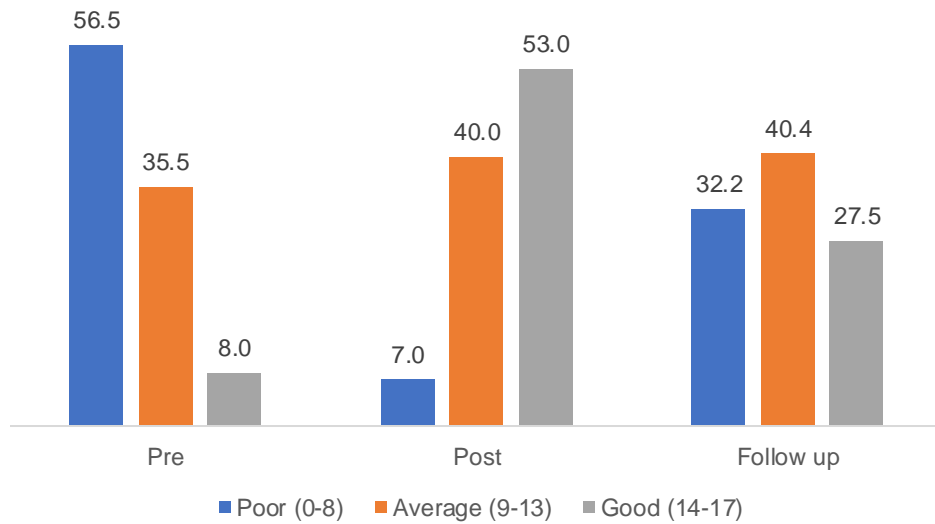
The vagina is the opening and canal that leads to the uterus. Where sexual intercourse takes place, where a baby is born through and where menstruation exits a woman's body.

Secondary School

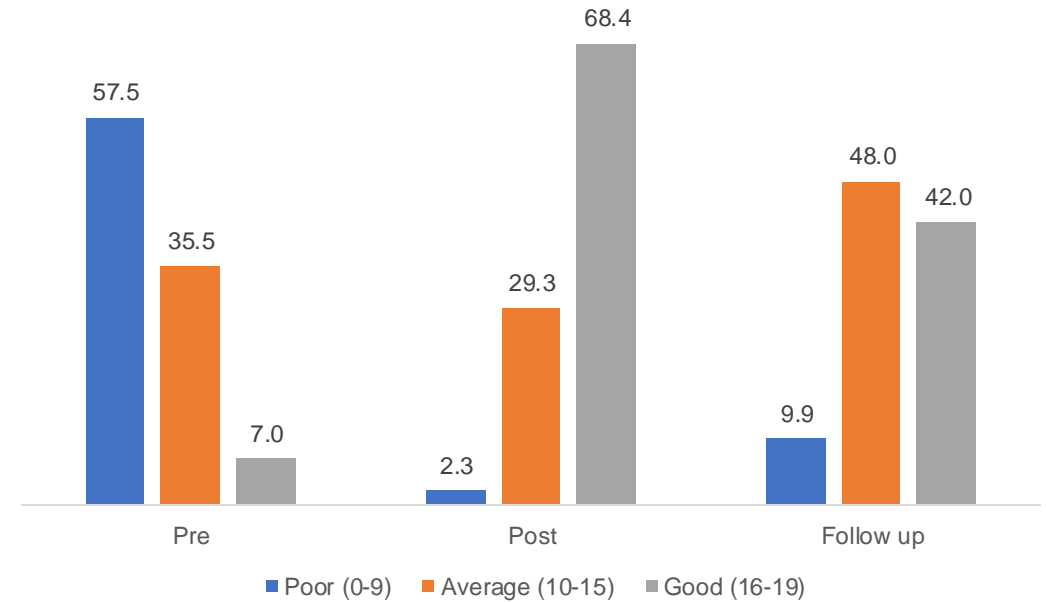


KNOWLEDGE SCORE

Primary School



Secondary School



SUMMARY OF KNOWLEDGE

Key findings on student knowledge related to puberty and menstruation:

1. A statistically significant enhancement in student comprehension was observed across all assessment domains following the implementation of the Menstrual Hygiene (MH) education program. Areas of notable improvement include:

- Menstruation duration
- Female anatomy
- Menstrual cycle duration and calculation
- The perception of menstruation as a normal physiological process.

2. A decline in knowledge retention was evident after a period of three to four months, as reflected in decreased correct response rates. To address this issue, Days for Girls (DfG) is advised to:

- Maintain ongoing engagement with educational institutions.
- Conduct periodic refresher sessions.
- Develop and disseminate supplementary educational resources, such as visual aids (posters).

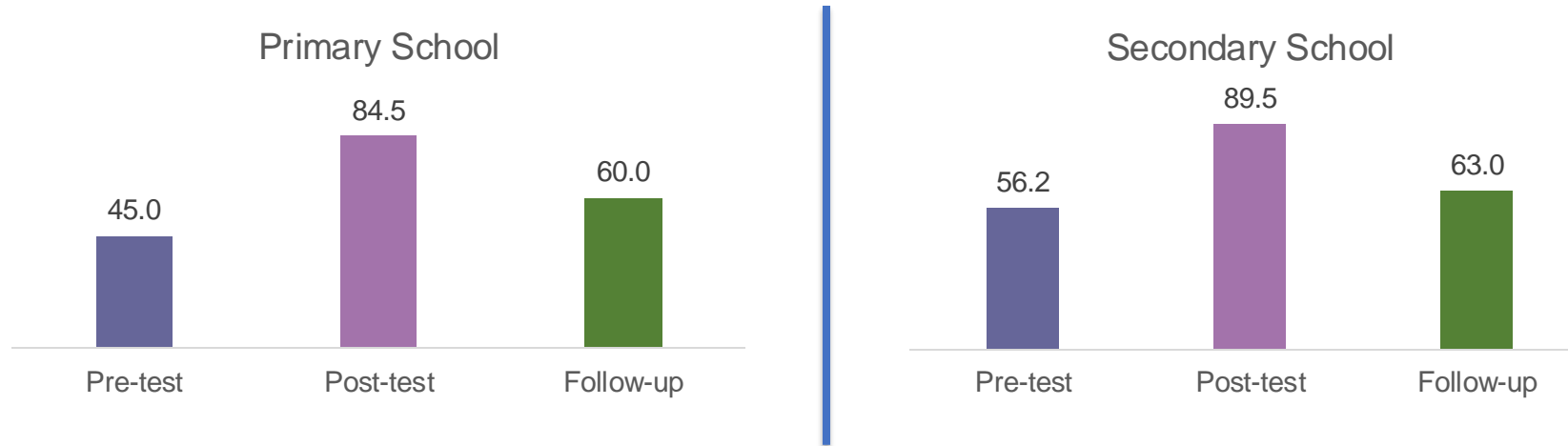
PERCEPTION & ATTITUDES



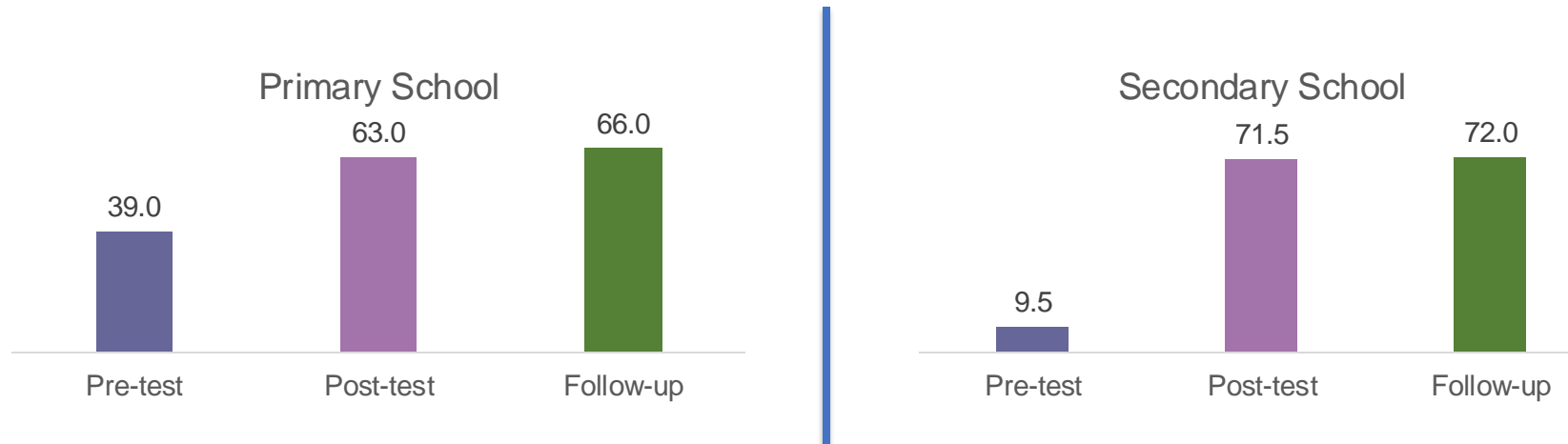
MISUNDERSTANDING PERCEPTION

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

When a girl is menstruating, she **CAN** play sport.



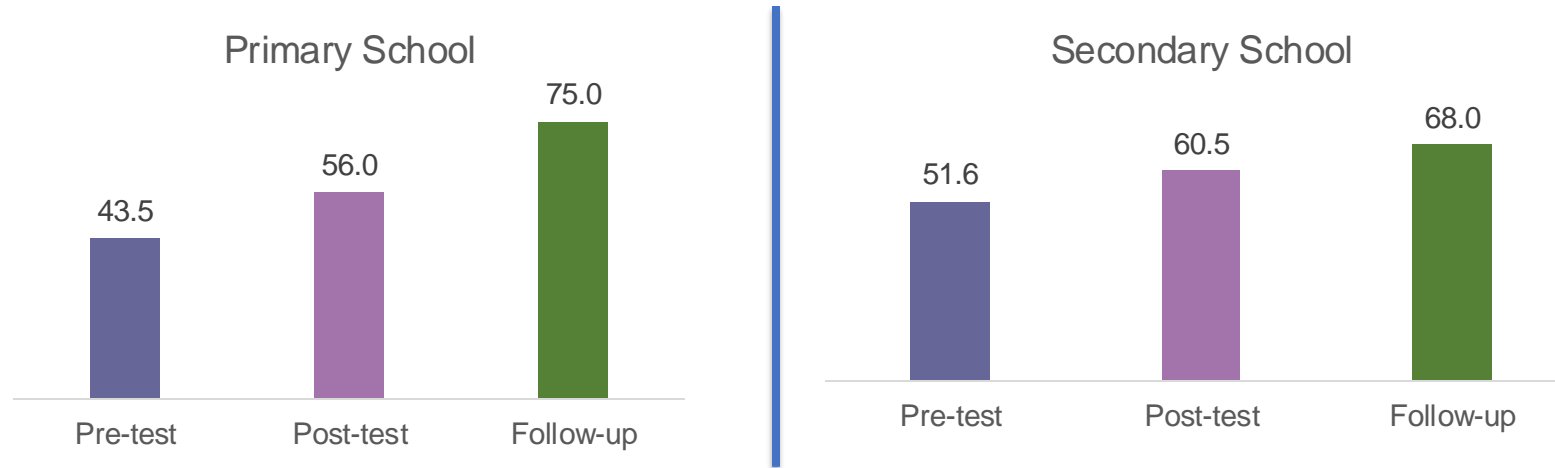
When a girl is menstruating, she **CAN** eat any food.



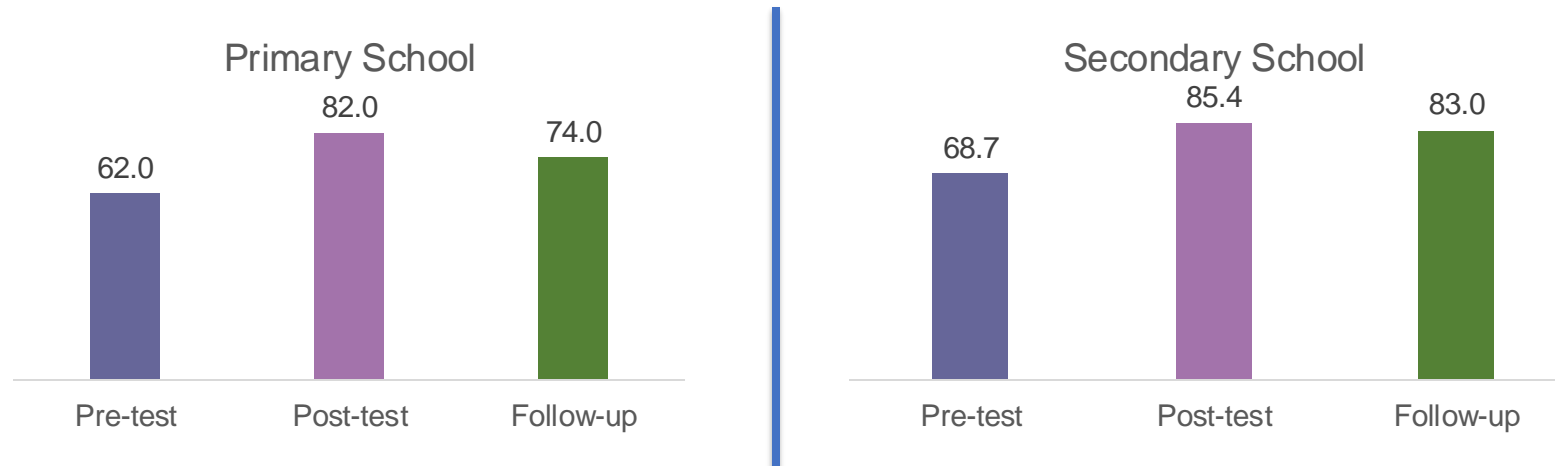
MISUNDERSTANDING PERCEPTION (CON'T)

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

When a girl is menstruating, she **CAN** go to school.



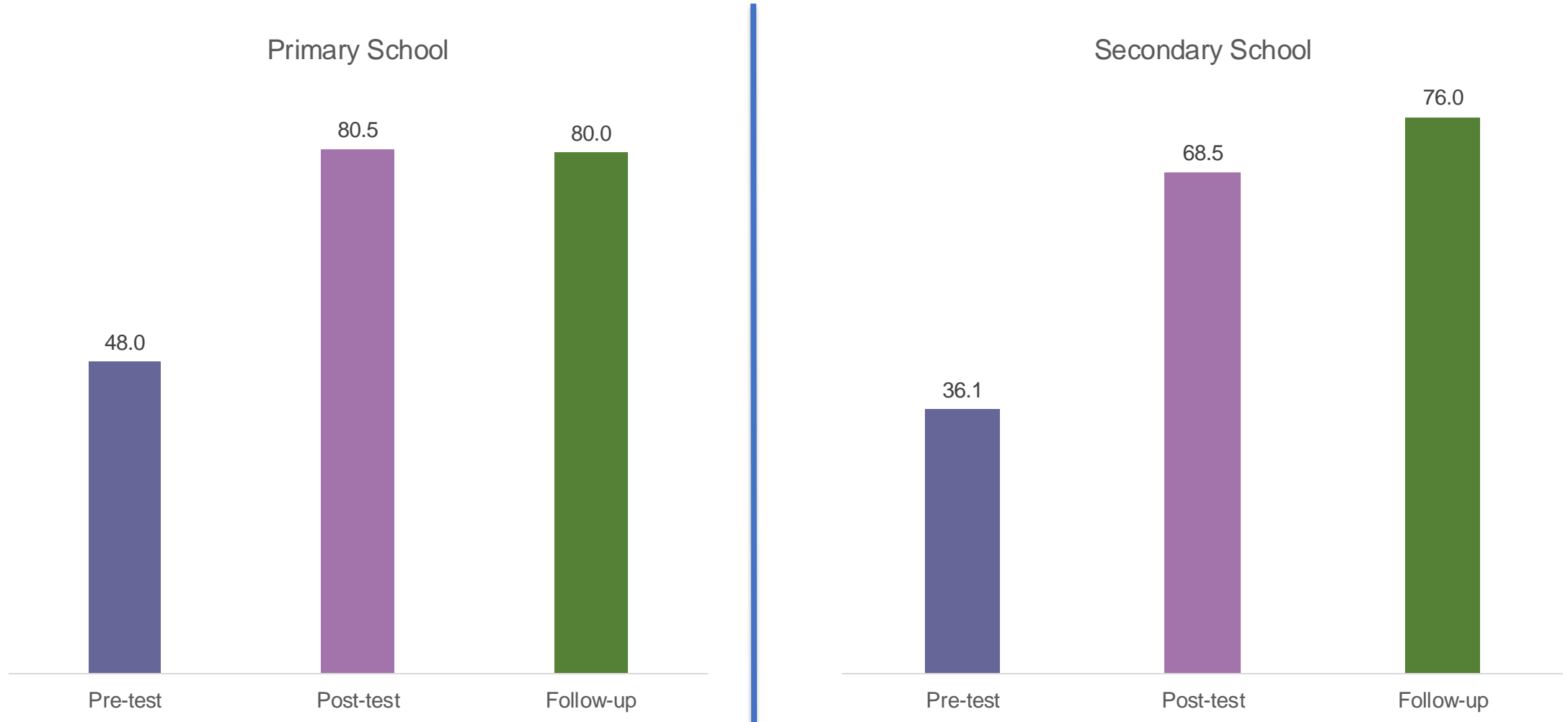
When a girl is menstruating, it is **NOT** okay to tease her.



MISUNDERSTANDING PERCEPTION (CON'T)

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

Menstruation should **NOT** be kept secret.



SUMMARY OF PERCEPTION & ATTITUDES

Overall findings demonstrate that the DfG MH lessons positively impacted students' perceptions and attitudes related to menstrual health. Key changes in student perceptions and attitudes towards menstruation after an educational intervention:

Playing sport: Before the intervention, 56% of secondary students and 45% of primary students believed that a girl could play sports while menstruating. This belief changed after the intervention, with 90% of secondary students and 85% of primary students believing that a girl could play sports during menstruation. At follow-up, these beliefs remained at 63% for secondary students and 60% for primary students.

Eating any food: Few secondary (10%) and primary (39%) students initially believed that a girl could eat any food during menstruation. However, this belief increased at the post-test and remained the same at the follow-up test (72%) for secondary students, while it continued to increase for primary students from 63% at the post-test to 66% at the follow-up test.

Attending school: The belief that a girl could go to school consistently increased for both secondary and primary school students from the pre-test (52% for secondary and 44% for primary) to the follow-up test (68% for secondary and 75% for primary).

Teasing: Before the intervention, approximately 60% of primary and secondary students believed that it was not okay to tease a girl when she was menstruating. This belief increased to approximately 80% at the post-test and remained high at the follow-up test.

Secrecy: The belief that menstruation should not be kept secret consistently increased for secondary students (from 36% at the pre-test to 69% at the post-test and to 76% at the follow-up test). This belief increased at the post-test from 48% to 81% for primary students but dropped slightly to 80% at the follow-up test.

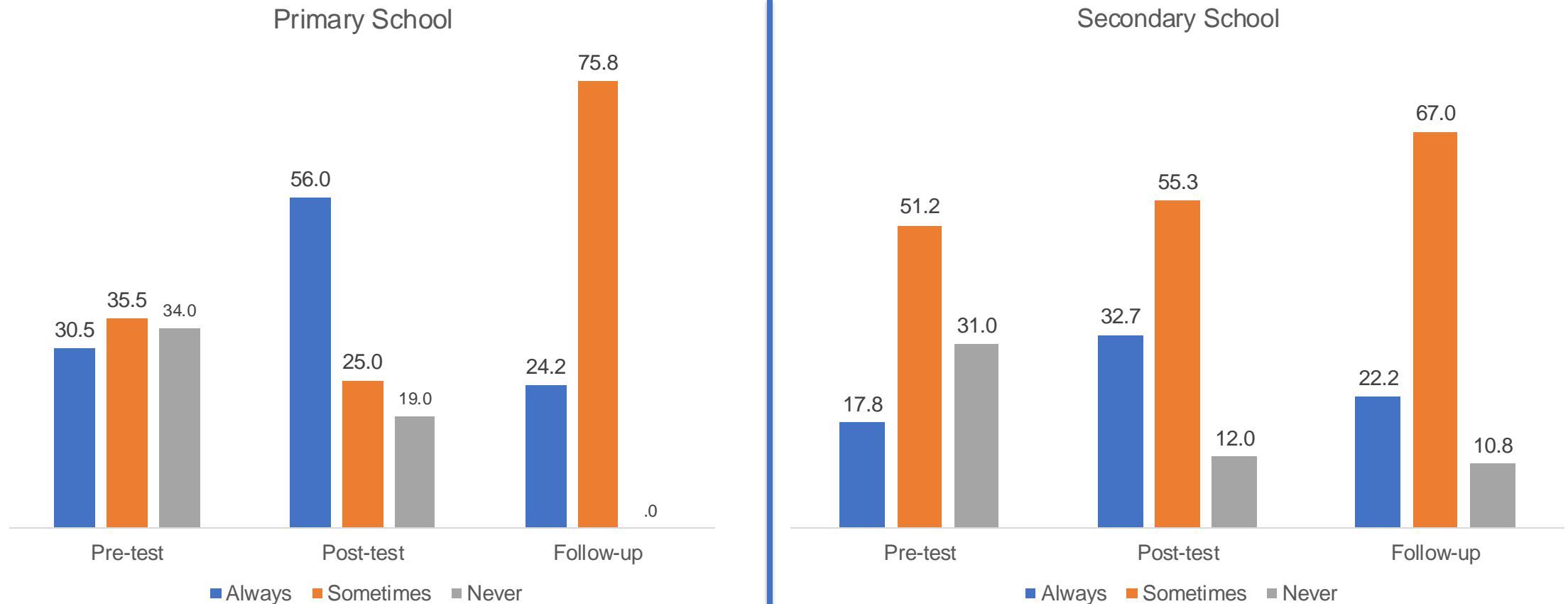
CONFIDENCE TALKING ABOUT PUBERTY AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH



CONFIDENT IN TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION WITH OLDER FAMILY MEMBERS

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

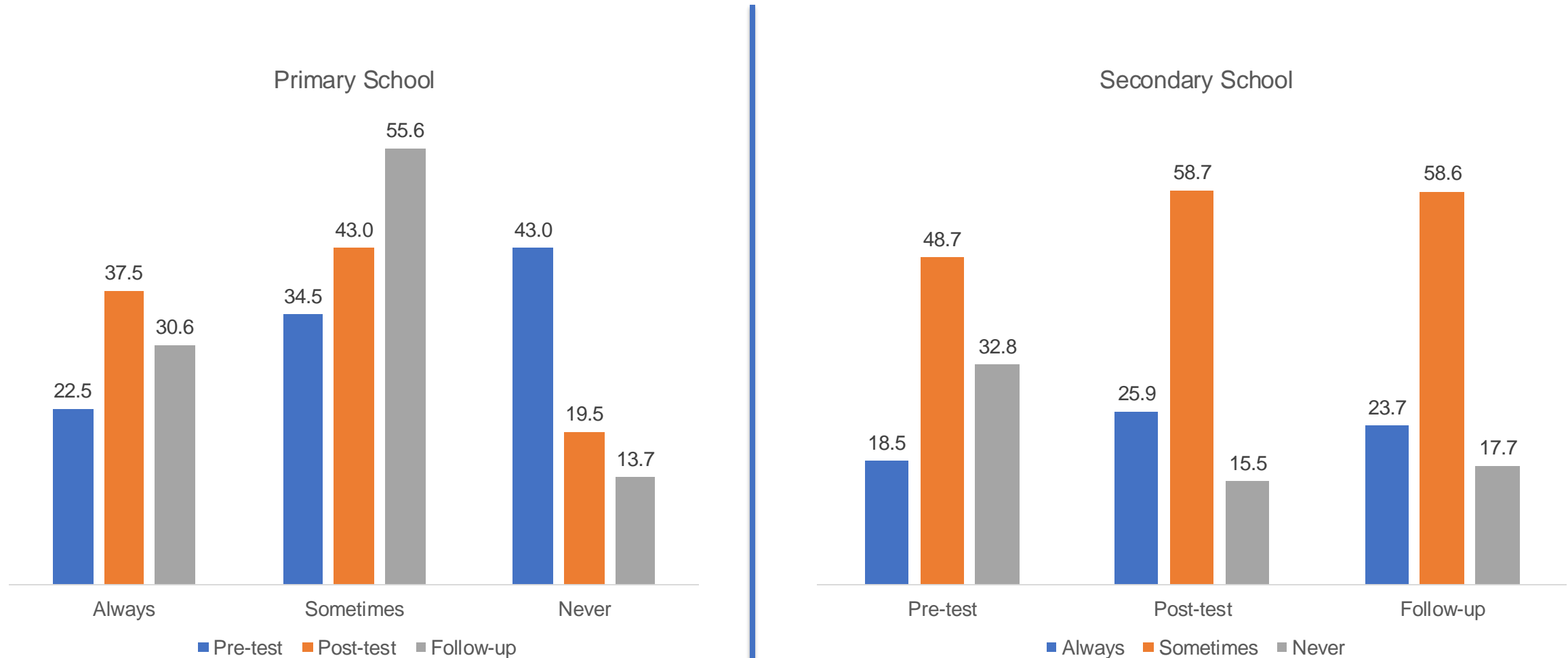
During the last three months, I felt confident talking about menstruation with an older family member (mother, older sister, aunt, father).



CONFIDENT IN TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION WITH PEERS

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

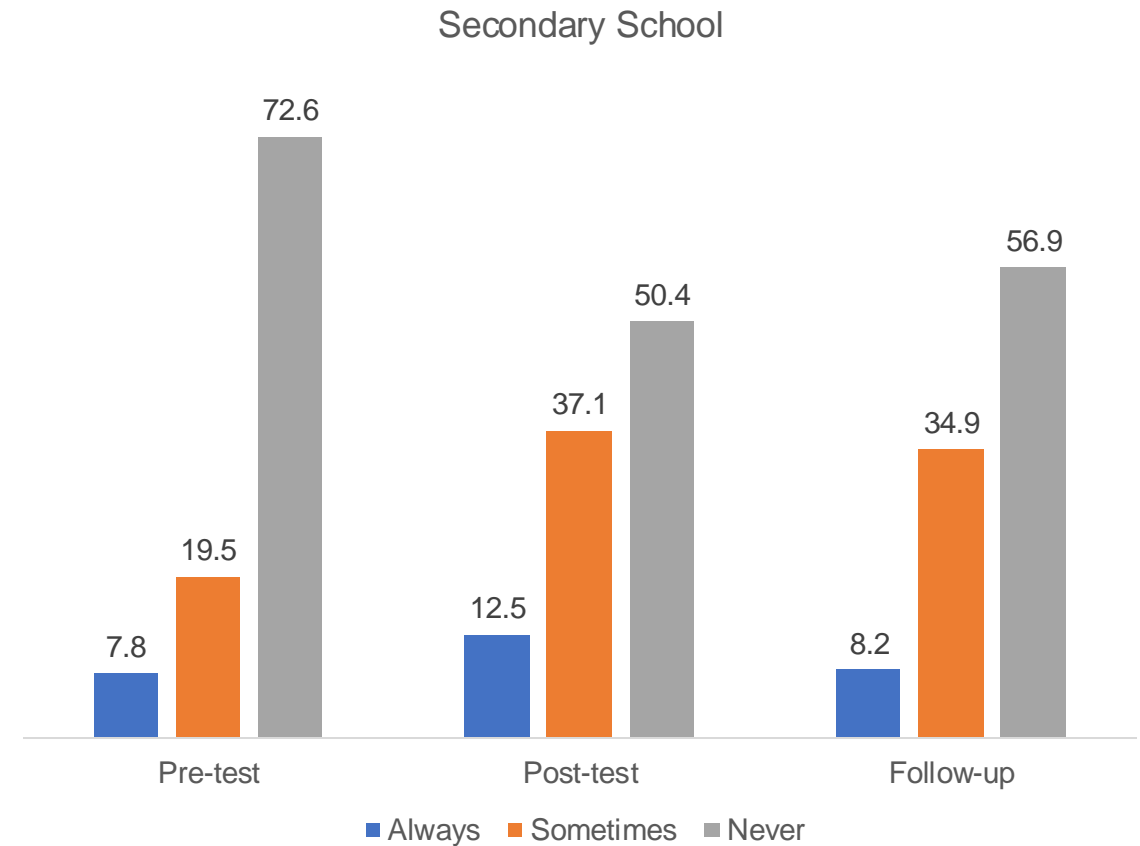
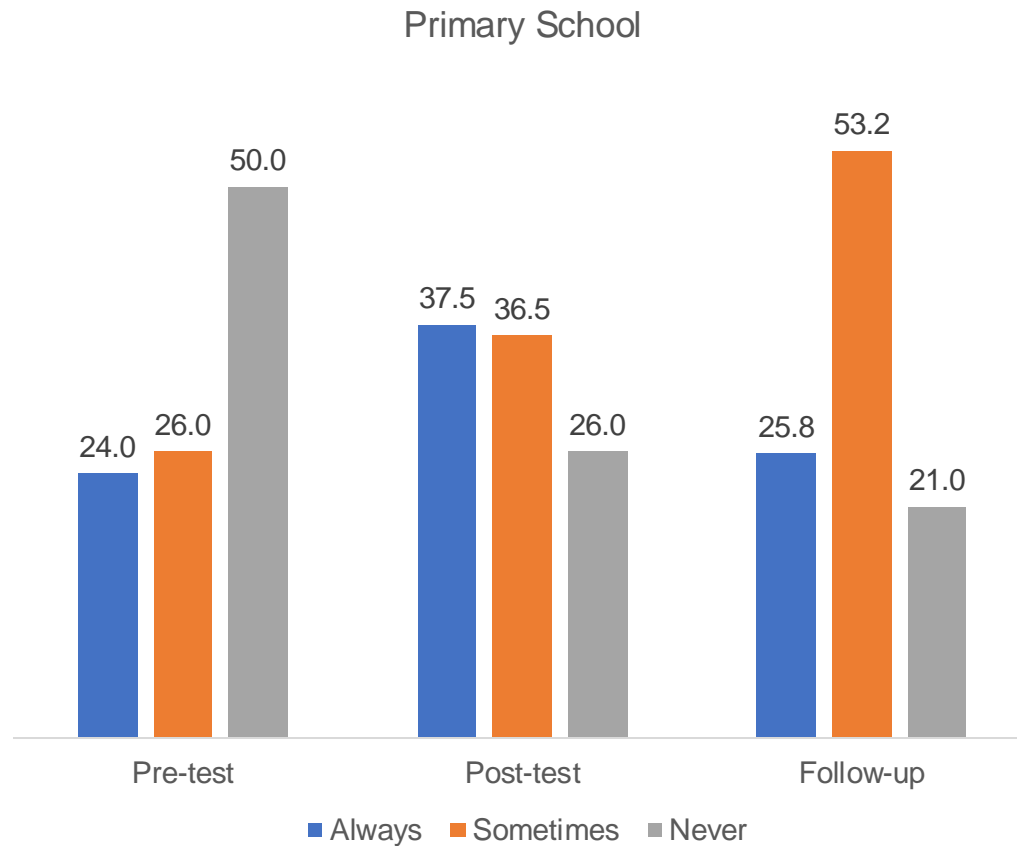
During the last three months, I felt confident talking about menstruation with my peers.



CONFIDENT IN TALKING ABOUT MENSTRUATION WITH TEACHERS

Based: Primary school student (n200), Secondary school student (n1,338), in %

During the last three months, I felt confident talking about menstruation with my teacher.



SUMMARY OF CONFIDENCE

Overall findings demonstrate that the DfG MH lessons positively impacted students' confidence related talking about menstrual health with various people in their lives. Confidence in Talking About Menstruation:

Older family member: Both primary and secondary students felt more confident talking about menstruation with older family members, with confidence increasing from 69% at the pre-test to 88% at the post-test and to 89% at the follow-up test for secondary students, and from 66% at the pre-test to 81% at the post-test and to 100% at the follow-up test for primary students.

Peers: Confidence in talking about menstruation with peers among secondary students increased from 67% at the pre-test to 84% at the post-test but dropped to 82% at the follow-up test. Among primary students, confidence continued to increase from 57% at the pre-test to 80% at the post-test and to 86% at the follow-up test.

Teachers: Similarly, confidence in talking about menstruation with teachers among secondary students increased from 27% at the pre-test to 50% at the post-test but dropped to 43% at the follow-up test. Among primary students, confidence continued to increase from 50% at the pre-test to 74% at the post-test and to 79% at the follow-up test.

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES

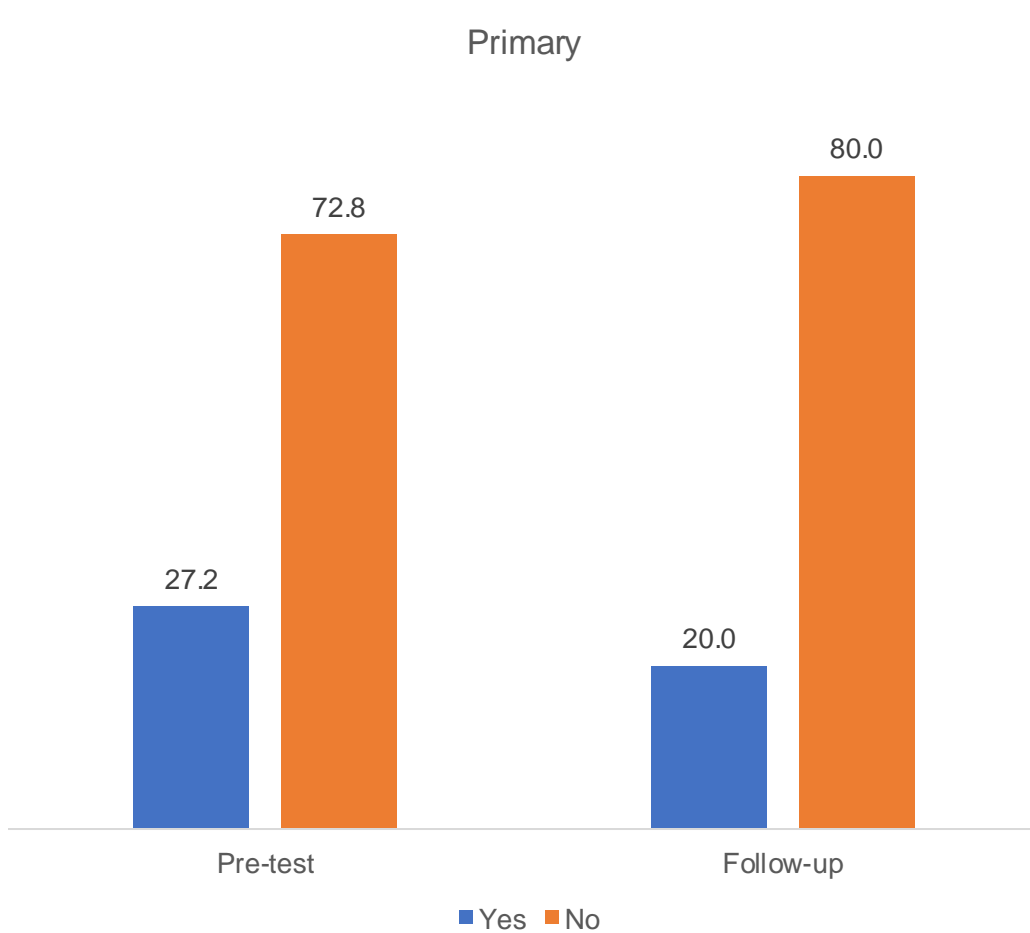


GIRLS WHO STARTED MENSTRUATING

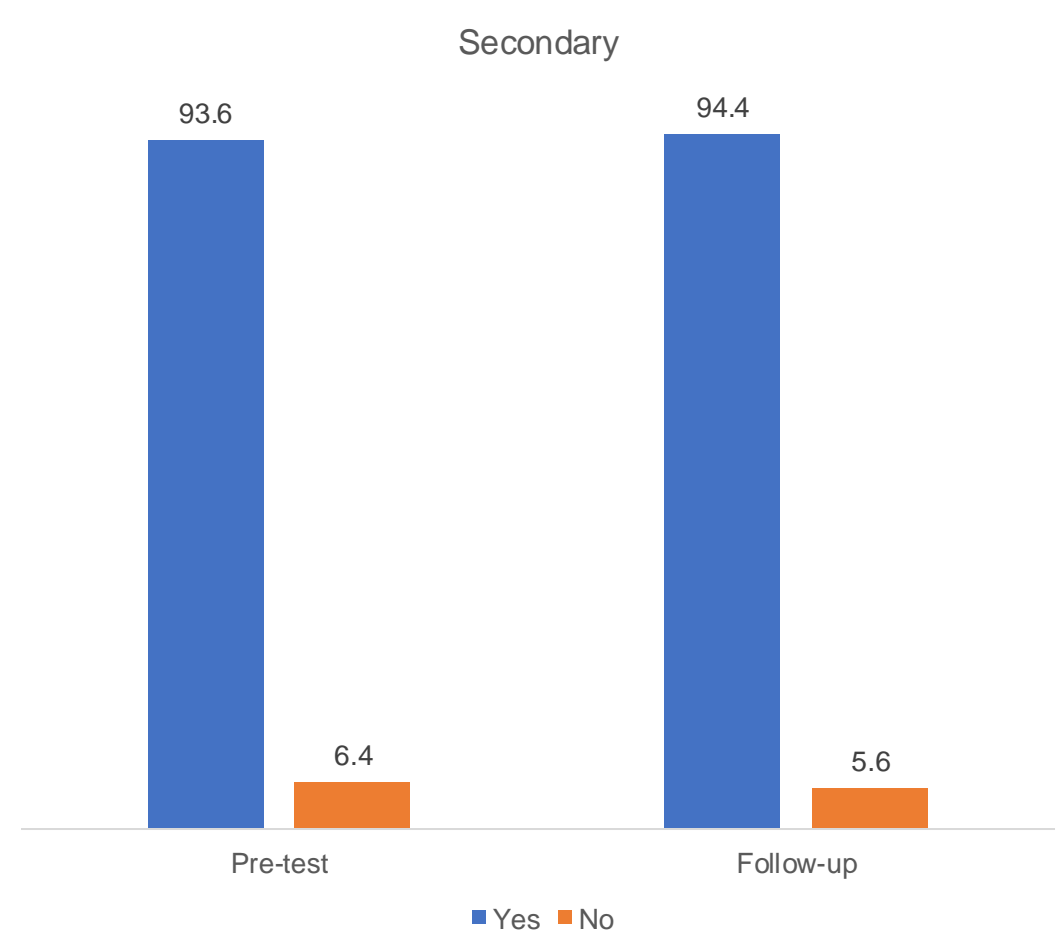
Based: Primary school student (n101), Secondary school student (n839), in %

Have you started menstruating yet?

Primary

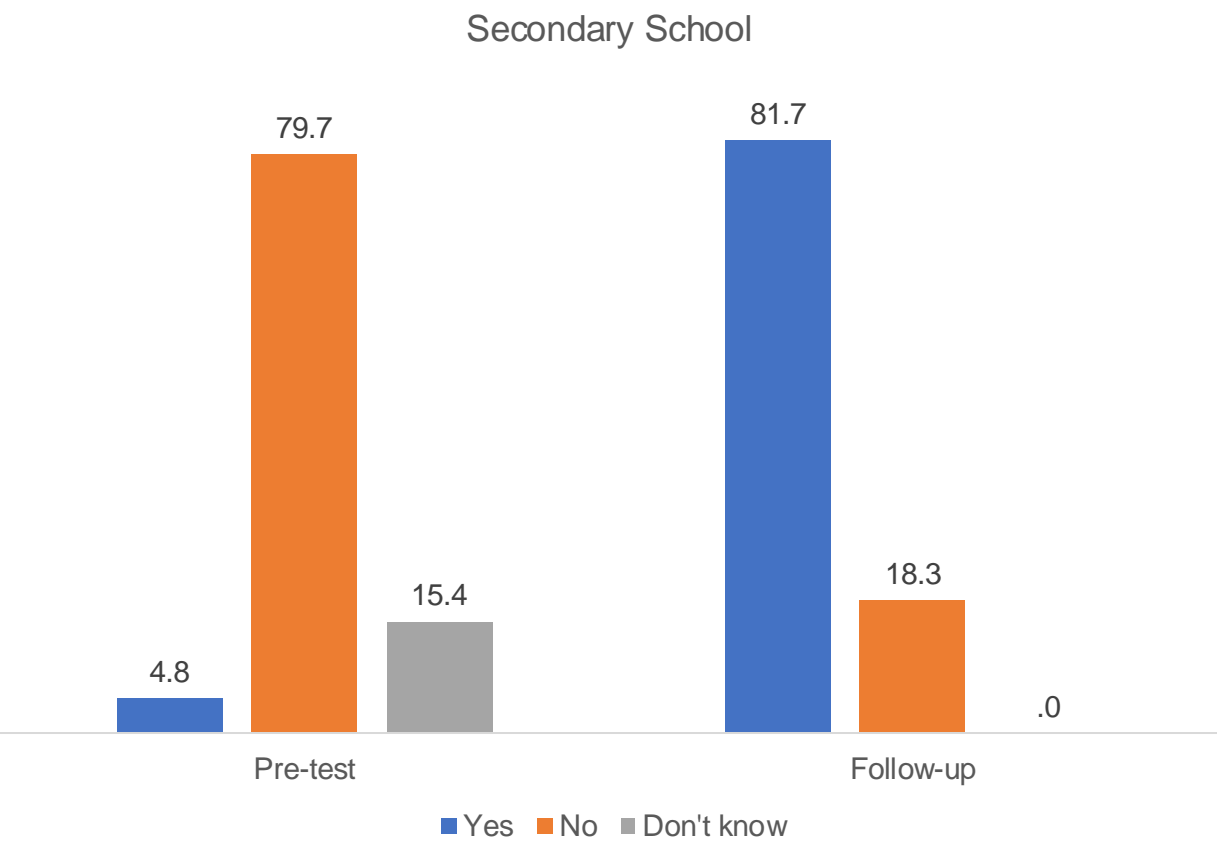


Secondary



GIRLS WHO USED A DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT

Based: Secondary school student (n343), in %

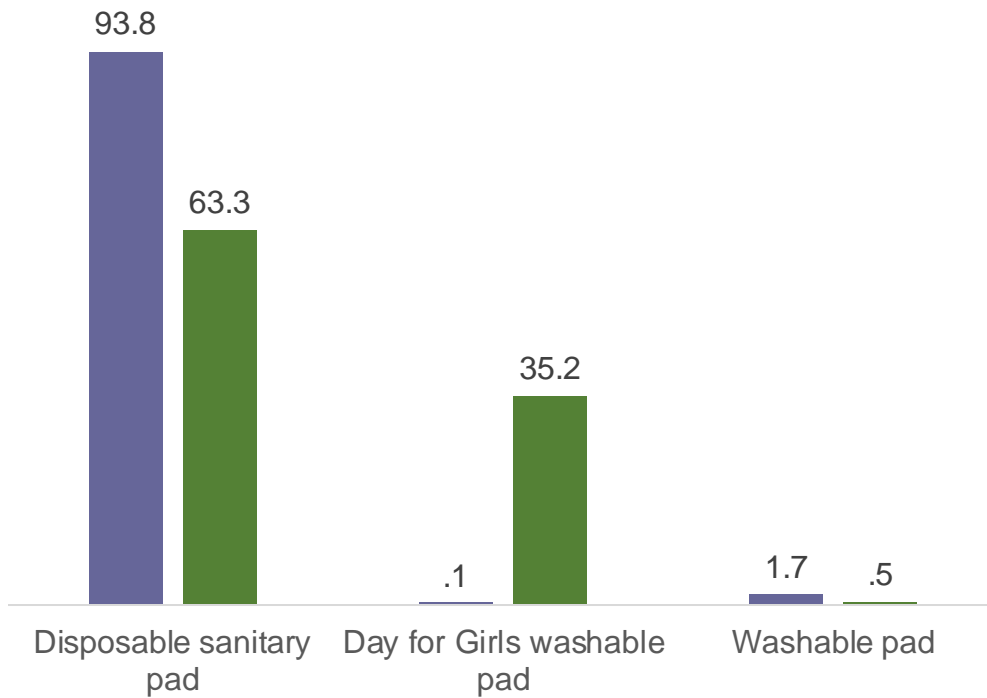


Reason for not using Days for Girls kit (N=77)	N
Don't know how to use it	69
Difficult to use	3
Health issues	2
Difficult to wash/clean	2
Rain (difficult to dry)	1

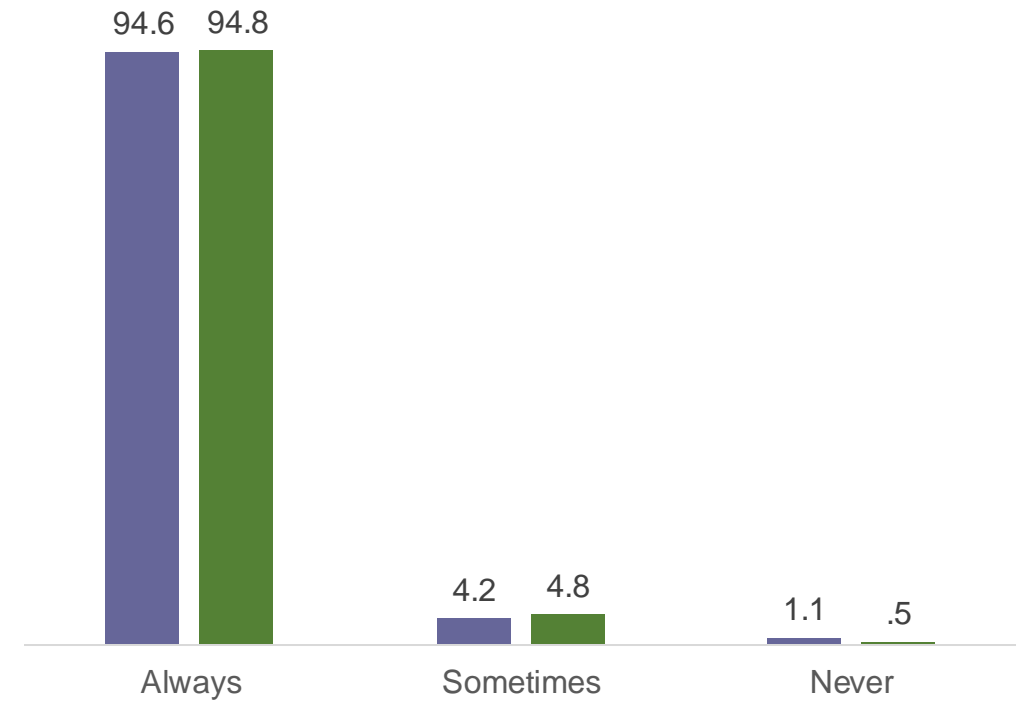
MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

PRIMARY MENSTRUAL PRODUCT USED IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS



GIRLS FELT CONFIDENT KEEPING THEMSELVES CLEAN DURING MENSTRUATION



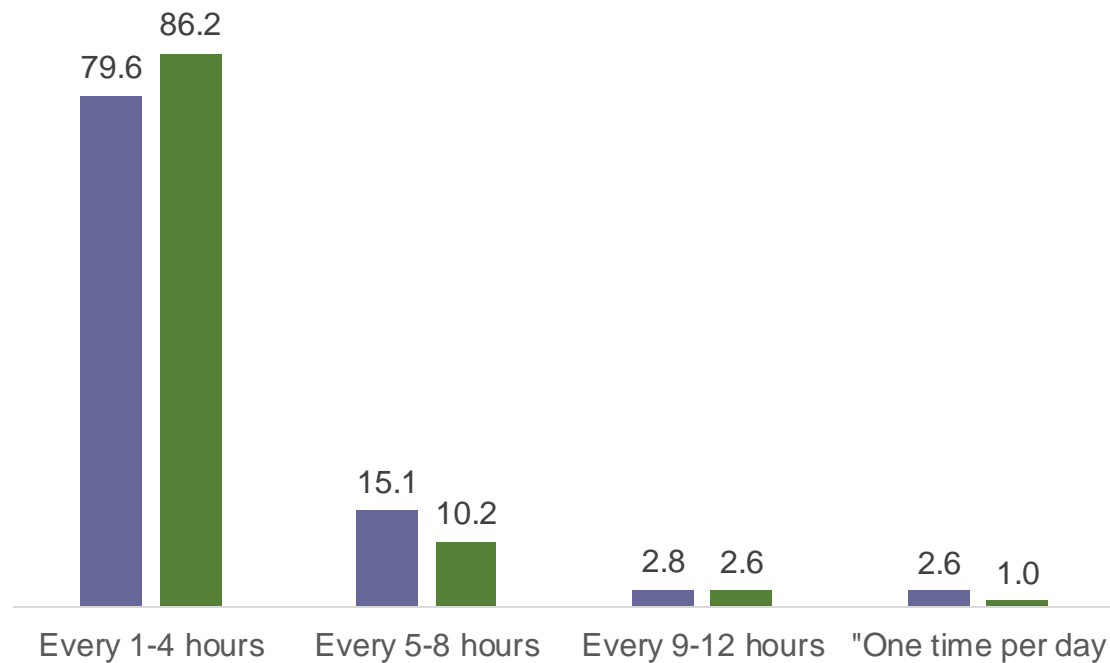
PRE-TEST
FOLLOW-UP

MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

FREQUENCY OF MENSTRUAL MANAGEMENT PRODUCT CHANGES

Average 3.6 hours



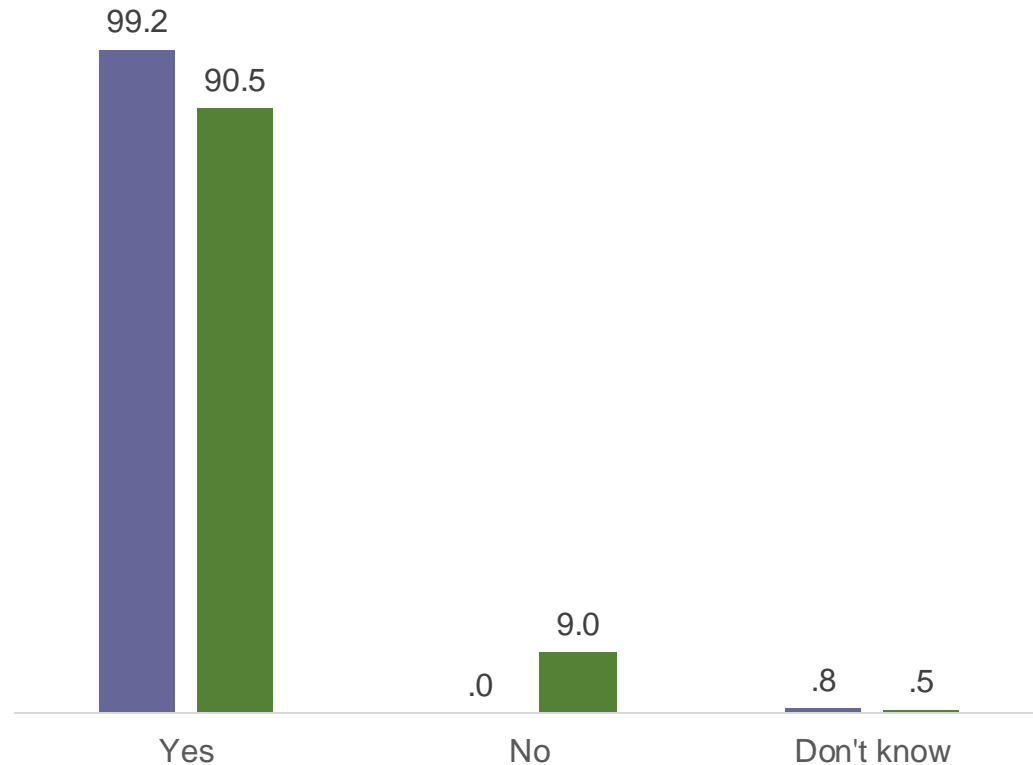
ON AVERAGE, GIRLS CHANGE THEIR MENSTRUAL PRODUCT OR MATERIAL IN EVERY **3.6 HOURS**.

PRE-TEST
FOLLOW-UP

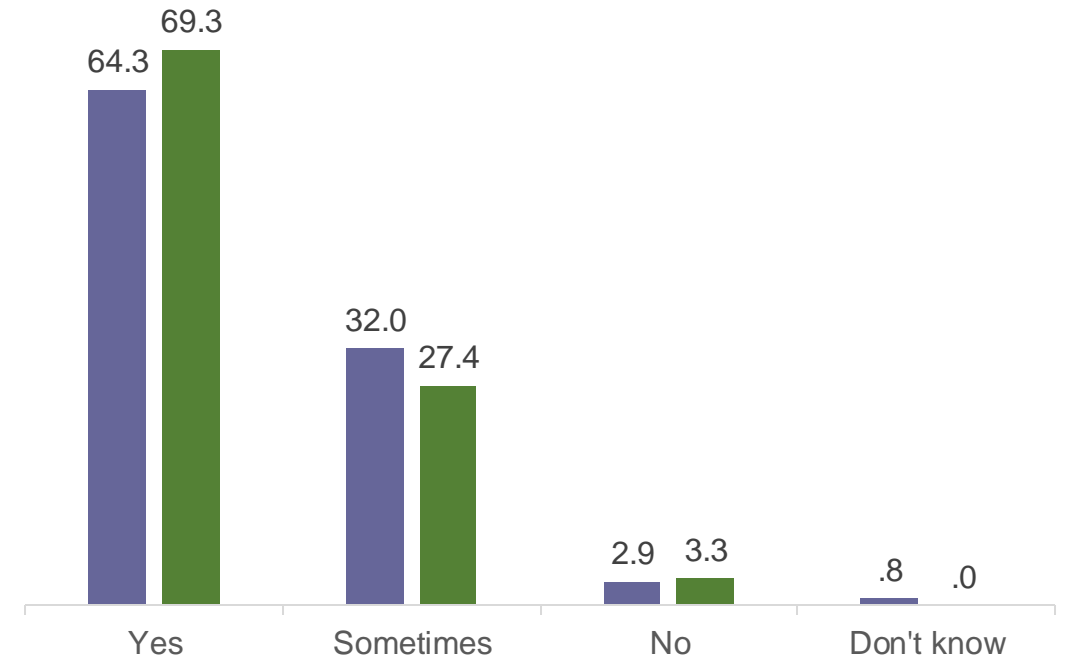
MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

PLACE IN SCHOOL TO CHANGE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS



WATER ACCESSIBILITY AT THE PLACE IN SCHOOL WHERE GIRLS CHANGE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

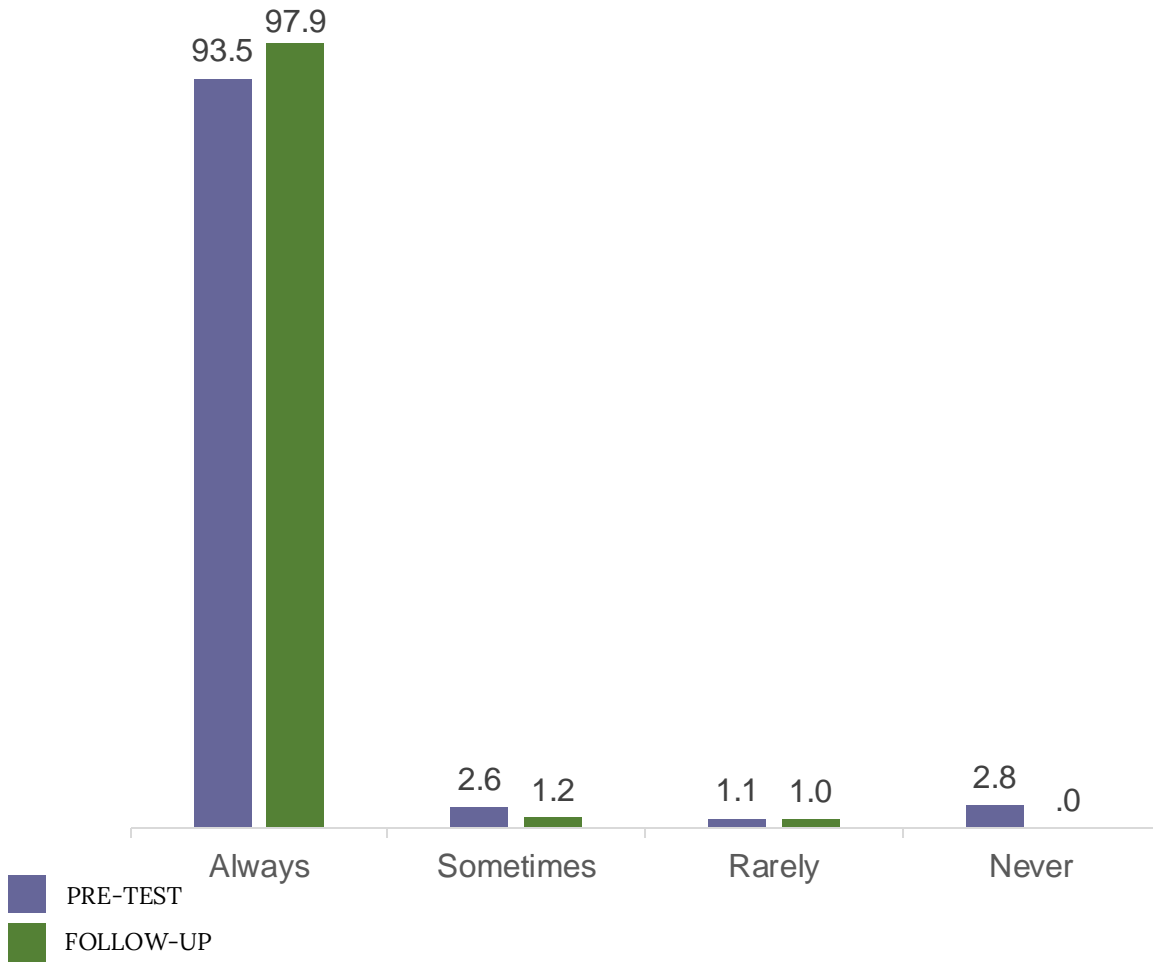


PRE-TEST
FOLLOW-UP

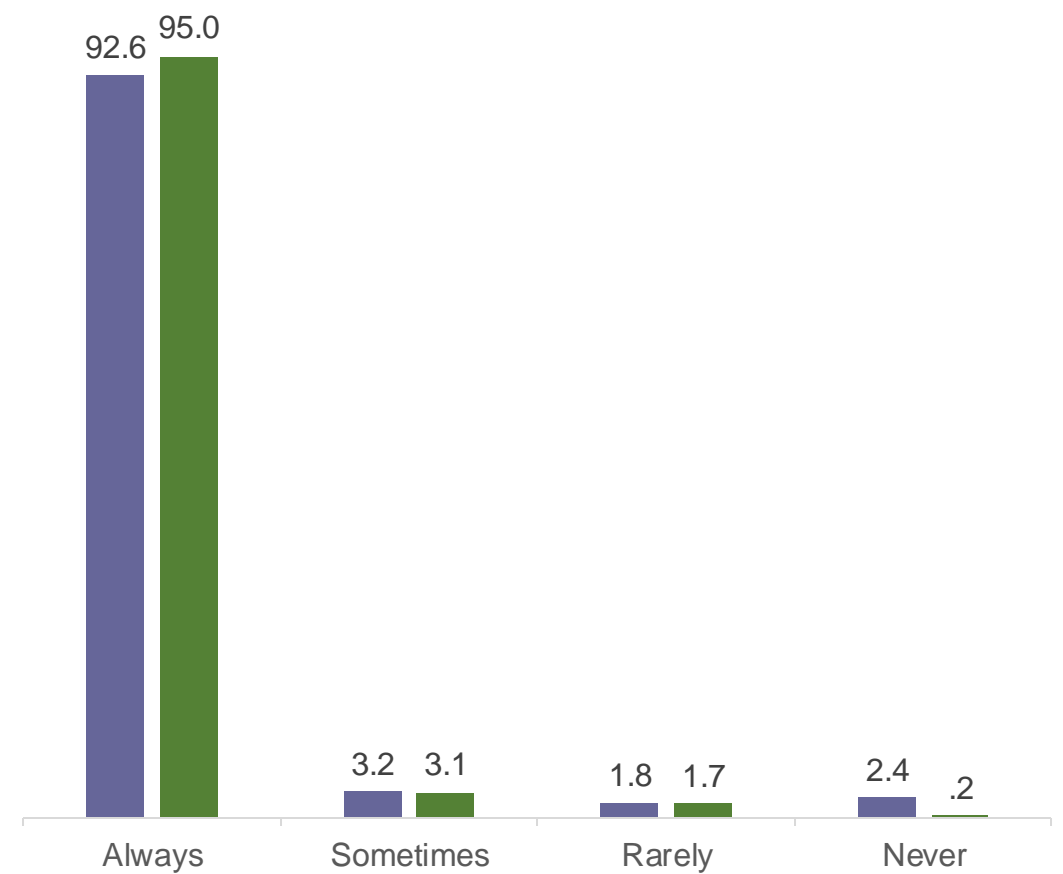
MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

COMPLETELY DRYING WASHABLE PADS



COMPLETELY DRYING WASHABLE PADS UNDER THE SUN

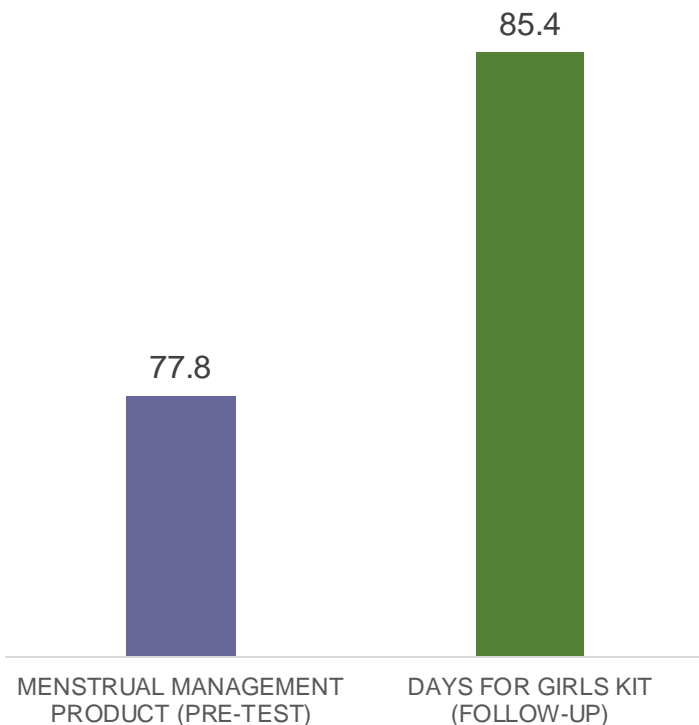


CONFIDENT OF USING MENSTRUAL MANAGEMENT PRODUCT/DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT

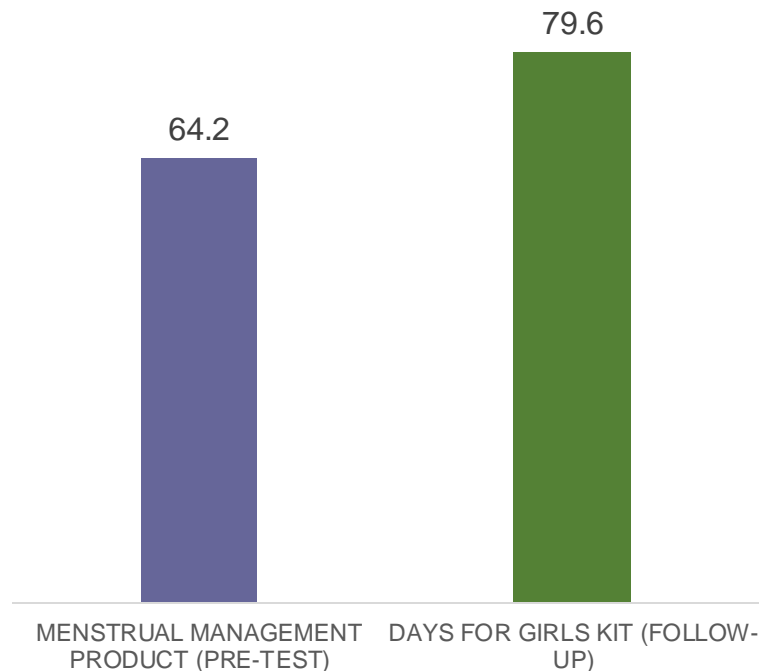
Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

Secondary

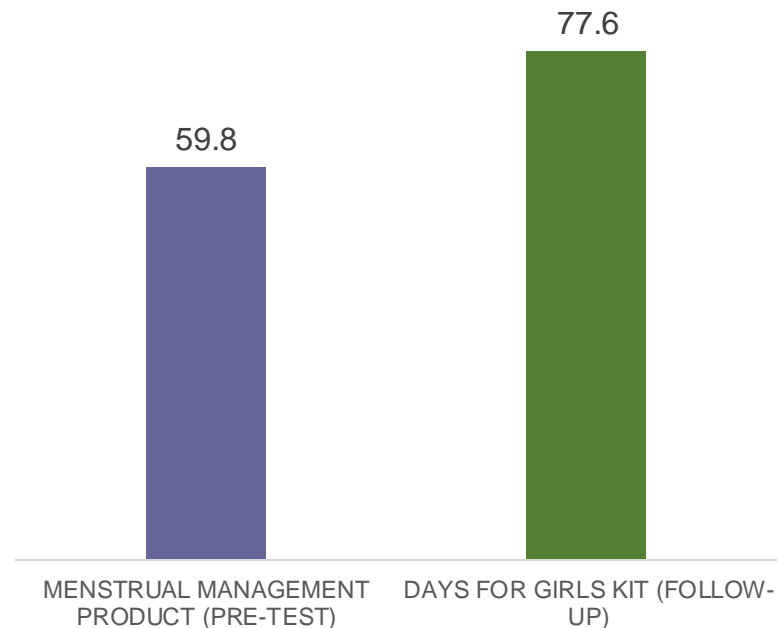
The menstrual products or materials I use to manage my menstruation are comfortable./When I use my DfG Washable Pad Kit I feel **comfortable.**



I feel confident that period blood will not leak onto my clothes when I use the menstrual product or material, I use to manage my menstruation./When I use my DfG Washable Pad Kit I feel confident that **period blood will not leak** onto my clothes.



I feel confident that there will not be a bad smell when I use the menstrual products or materials, I use to manage my menstruation./When I use my DfG Washable Pad Kit I feel confident that there **will not be a bad smell.**



PRE-TEST
FOLLOW-UP

CONFIDENT OF USING MENSTRUAL MANAGEMENT PRODUCT/DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

Secondary

I feel comfortable and confident about being at school when I have my period when I use the menstrual products or materials, I use to manage my menstruation./When I use my DfG Washable Pad Kit I feel **comfortable and confident about being at school** when I

72.3

79.6

MENSTRUAL MANAGEMENT PRODUCT (PRE-TEST) DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT (FOLLOW-UP)

PRE-TEST

FOLLOW-UP

I feel confident doing all the activities I normally do when I am not menstruating (attending school; participating in class; playing sport, going to work; going to the market,) when I have my period./When I use my DfG Washable Pad Kit I feel **confident do**

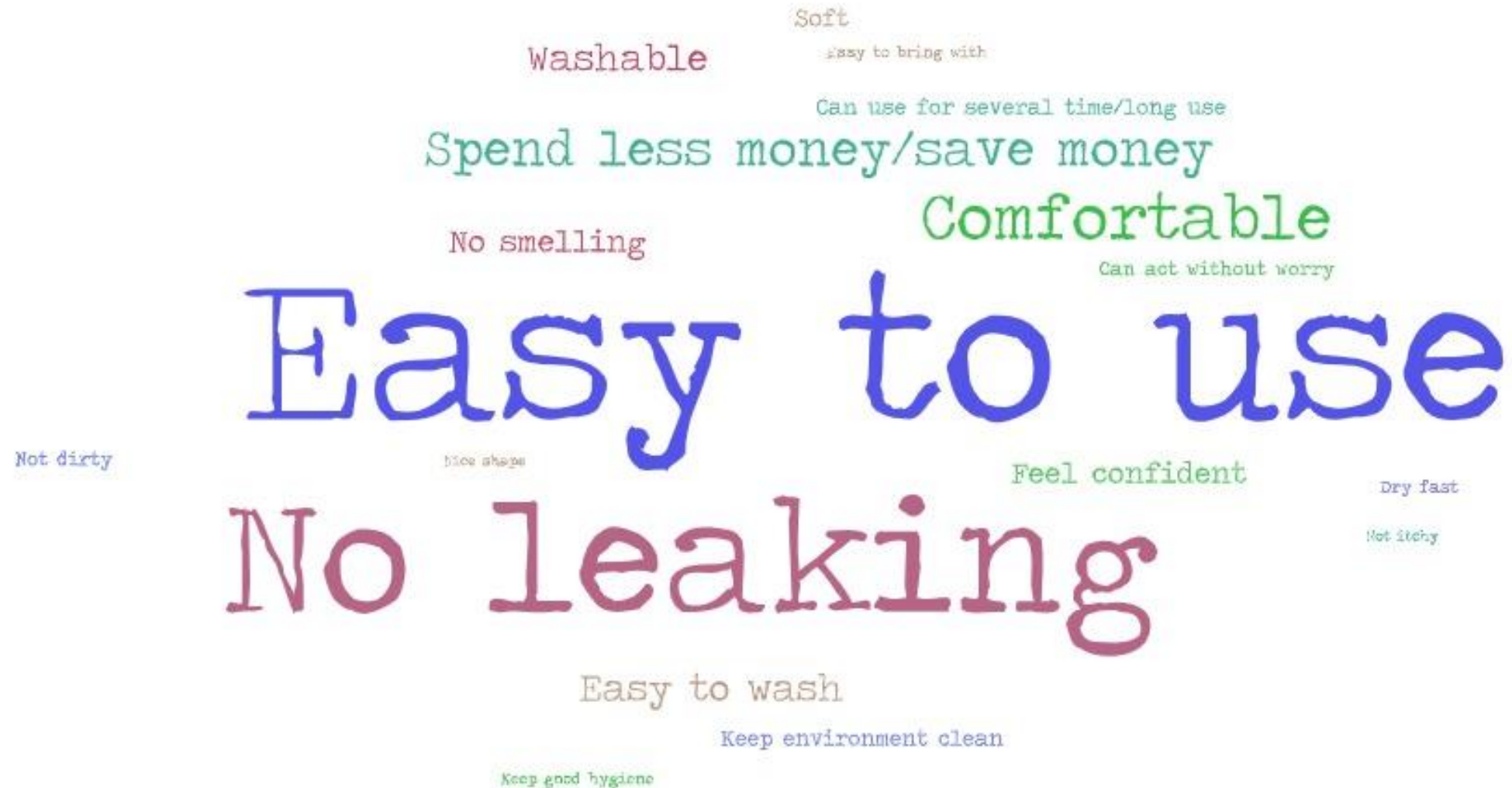
51.8

79.6

MENSTRUAL MANAGEMENT PRODUCT (PRE-TEST) DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT (FOLLOW-UP)

POSITIVE FEEDBACK ON DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %



FEEDBACK ON DAYS FOR GIRLS KIT

Based: Secondary school student (n784), in %

Collor removed after wash
Stained still after wash
Strong smell of blood
Wet fabric
Leaking
Too big
Thin cloth
Tight when full of blood
Strong smell of the soap
Difficult to dry
Difficult to wash
Uncomfortable
Difficult to change
Should be in dark collor (black/dark red)
Thick
It is not stand still

SUMMARY OF MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS & EXPERIENCES

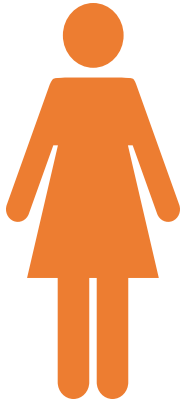
Overall findings demonstrate that the DfG Kits positively impacted students' menstrual experience. Menstrual Products and Experiences:

- A higher proportion of secondary school female students (94%) had started menstruating compared to primary school female students (~20%).
- Among menstruating secondary school students, 82% used the Days for Girls (DfG) washable pads they received. Amongst the 18% (77 STUDENTS) who did not try using the DfG washable pads, the primary reason was a lack of knowledge on how to use them (69 STUDENTS), indicating a lack of familiarity. Some students reported difficulty using them (3 STUDENTS). The rainy season also discouraged a small portion of girls (1 STUDENT) from trying the DfG washable pads due to drying difficulties.
- Prior to the program, students reported that disposable pads were the primary menstrual product they used. After receiving DfG washable pads, 35.2% (148 STUDENTS) switch to using the DfG washable pads as their primary menstrual product, with the remaining X% choosing to use it as their secondary option.
- After the intervention, more girls changed their menstrual management products every 1-4 hours (79.6% at pre-test and 86.2% at follow-up). Notably, while almost 100% of girls initially reported having a place at school to change their products, this figure dropped to 90.5% at the follow-up. This decrease may be related to the use of washable pads and the potential difficulty in finding suitable changing places at school.
- At the follow-up, 97.9% of girls using washable pads reported always drying them completely. However, only 95% reported drying them completely in the sun, possibly due to the rainy season.
- Girls expressed greater confidence in using the DfG Kit compared to other menstrual products. For example, 52% of girls felt confident doing their normal activities while using other products, compared to 80% when using the DfG Kit.
- The DfG kit received positive feedback, including ease of use (128 STUDENTS), no leaking (124 STUDENTS), comfort (50 STUDENTS), and cost savings (39 STUDENTS). 130 STUDENTS shared constructive feedback about the Kit including difficulty washing the pads and concerns about size or discomfort.



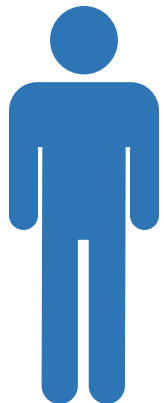
QUALITATIVE

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS



Ratanakiri (Female)

- Number of participants/group=8
- Number of group=3
- Age: 11 – 13 years old
- Grade: 8-9



Ratanakiri (Male)

- Number of participants/group=8
- Number of group=3
- Age: 11 – 15 years old
- Grade: 8-9

A total of 48 students participated in the focus group discussions equally divided between male groups (3) and female groups (3).

MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION



Students reported having some knowledge of menstrual health from **school**, as health topics are now included in life skills courses. The lessons cover hygiene, what to prepare for their first period, and what they should and should not do during menstruation. However, they primarily talk to or ask their **mother** or **sister** about their first period. **Friends** are the third most common source of information about menstruation, while **Facebook** was also mentioned by female students.

QUOTES ABOUT STUDENTS' MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION

"When I got my first period, I was a bit scared and asked my mom about it. She said it was natural for women and showed me how to use sanitary pads. I also talked with my friends and shared my experiences, discussing what to do during menstruation. For example, I told them not to be shy and to tell me if they needed anything." **Female student, Borkeo**



"I learned about the menstrual cycle, bodily changes, how to sew washable pads, etc., with the Komar Baitong organization. At that time, all participants were girls." **Female student, Buthong Ouchum**



"I had learned about puberty and menstruation at school in health class, one hour per week. They taught about birth spacing, male and female reproductive organs, and bodily changes." **Male student, Lomphat**



REACTION TO STUDYING MENSTRUAL HEALTH

Some of them felt **shy** the first time they studied puberty and menstrual health because they thought it was a shameful topic. However, when they heard about it several times at school, they felt more confident to talk about this topic openly.

"I felt shy the first time I learned about it. I thought the lesson was just for girls, and I wondered why boys needed to learn about it."

Male student, Lomphat



"I learned about the menstrual cycle, bodily changes, how to sew washable pads, etc., with the Komar Baitong organization. At that time, we were not brave enough to ask any." **Female student, Buthong Ouchum**



"At that time, I felt shy because there were pictures in the book." "Previously, I wondered what menstruation was. When I heard about girls' menstruation, I thought it might be like the rainy season or dry season. Now I understand it well."

Male student, Buthong Tes Anlong



TEACHING TECHNIQUES



Although most of them had learned about puberty and menstruation in school or with other organizations, they reported gaining only general knowledge, not the specific or detailed information provided by DfG.

The techniques used by the DfG teachers made learning enjoyable and engaging, especially the **Q&A** sessions and the **practical demonstrations** of menstrual management products, which made them feel more comfortable.



QUOTES ABOUT TEACHING TECHNIQUE

"I appreciated the materials used during the training, especially the practice session on how to use washable pads. I also enjoyed the Q&A games, which were fun and informative. The teaching style was engaging and created a relaxed learning environment." **Female student, Borkeo**

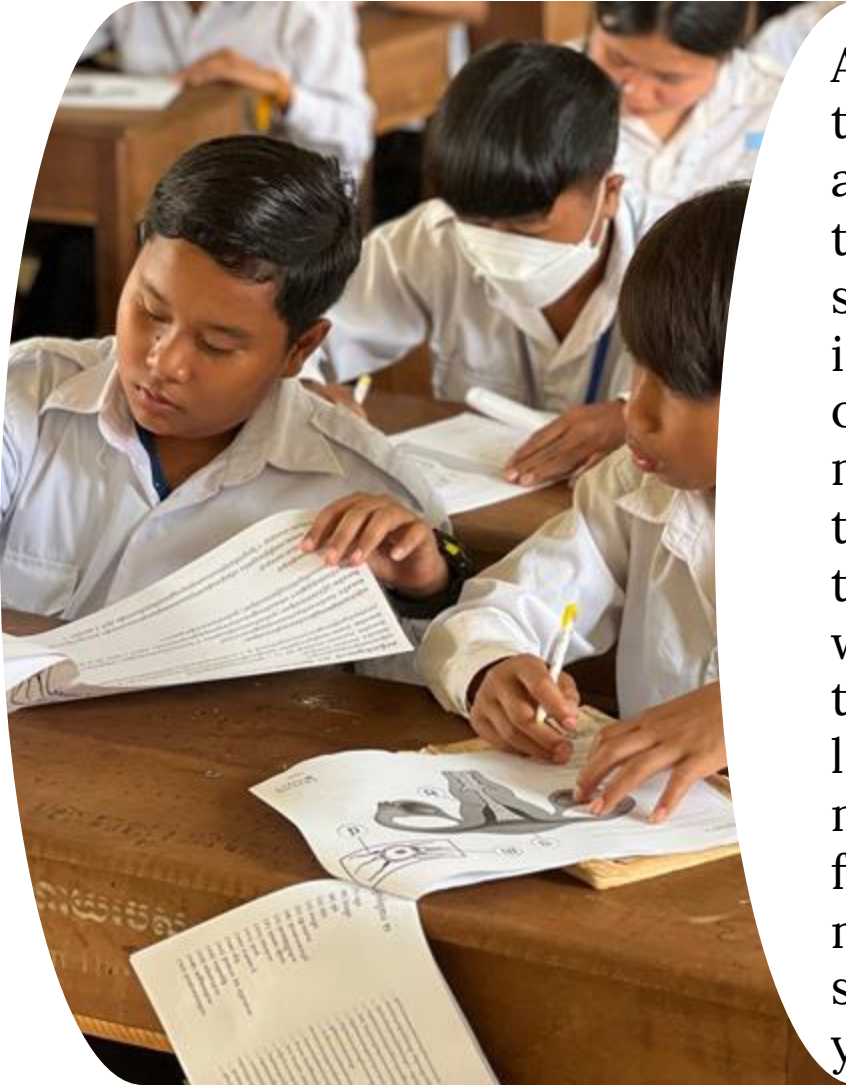
"I like the practical demonstrations because I can see everything clearly, which helps me understand and remember easily." "I like the Q&A because it makes me rethink the lesson and try to remember it in order to answer the questions." **Male student, Veun Sai**

"I gained more knowledge; previously, we only knew general information about menstruation, but now we understand it well." "I know how to use sanitary pads." **Female student, Veun Sai**

"I am happy to learn because there were pictures, which made it easy for me to understand." "We were happy to ask and answer questions, as some of the questions and answers made us laugh." **Male student, Lomphat**



CONFIDENCE IN TALKING AND SHARING THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF PUBERTY & MENSTRUAL HEALTH



Although many students thought that puberty and menstrual health is a good topic for both boys and girls to learn about together, they seemed hesitant to share this information with their male friends or relatives, as they still thought men were not interested in this topic or might consider it none of their business. Female students were more likely to feel confident talking about and sharing what they learned about puberty and menstrual health with their female family members and friends, while male students were more likely to share this information with their younger sisters.



QUOTES ABOUT STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE SHARING ABOUT PUBERTY AND MENSTRUAL HEALTH

"I will share this information with my younger sisters, friends, and anyone else who is unaware. I can advise younger girls when they get their first period, explaining how to use menstrual products, maintain hygiene, and address common misconceptions. If boys ask me, I will share information with them as well. I also plan to share on Facebook, posting about menstrual hygiene and other related topics." **Female student, Borkeo**

"I will share this information with my younger sister, aunt, or my mother because they all have menstruation, so they can calculate their menstrual cycle and maintain hygiene." I don't share with male friends because we don't have menstruation like girls do, and they don't care about it." **Male student, Buthong Tes Anlong**

"As I am a student club member, I will share it with those who did not learn about it today and with my family members." "I will share it with my younger sisters, so they know how to prepare themselves when they get their period, how to maintain hygiene, and how to use sanitary pads." **Male student, Veun Sai**



RECOMMENDATIONS & SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF FINDING

This study examined the impact of a menstrual health educational intervention on students' knowledge, confidence, perceptions, attitudes and experiences related to puberty and menstrual health. Key findings include:

Knowledge:

- **Improved knowledge post-intervention:** Significant improvements were seen in students' understanding of puberty/menstrual health definitions, age of onset, menstruation/cycle duration, and female anatomy immediately after the intervention.
- **Specific knowledge gaps:** Prior to the intervention, there were significant gaps in knowledge regarding the fertile period, female anatomy, and female reproductive organs which was improved by the intervention.
- **Knowledge attrition over time:** A three-month follow-up revealed some knowledge loss, particularly regarding age of onset (especially for boys), menstruation/cycle duration, and female anatomy. Knowledge of physical changes of puberty and menstruation as a health indicator remained consistently high.

Perceptions and Attitudes:

- **Positive shifts in attitudes:** The intervention led to positive changes in students' beliefs about menstrual health, including the ability to participate in sports and other activities, attend school, and the importance of open communication. These positive changes were largely maintained at the follow-up, with some minor declines.
- **Increased confidence in communication:** Students reported increased confidence in discussing menstruation with family members, peers, and (to a lesser extent) teachers. Confidence with family members remained high at follow-up, while confidence with peers and teachers saw some decline.

SUMMARY OF FINDING

Menstrual Products and Experiences (Secondary School Females):

- **High DfG washable pad usage:** A large majority of menstruating secondary students used Days for Girls (DfG) washable pads. Lack of knowledge on how to use them was the main reason for non-use for the small minority who didn't use them.
- **Students had a positive experience using the DfG pads:** Students reported positive experiences using the DfG pads including in confidence being at school, no leakage and not being held back from their daily activities. Many students reported integrating the use of DfG pads girls' their menstrual practices as a secondary product alongside disposable pads for those who have access to these (rather than entirely replacing it).
- **Improved menstrual hygiene:** The intervention led to more frequent changing of menstrual products demonstrating improved hygiene practices.
- **Concerns about changing facilities:** While almost all girls initially reported having a place to change products at school, this decreased slightly at follow-up.
- **Positive feedback on DfG Kit:** The DfG Kit received positive feedback regarding ease of use, leak prevention, comfort, and cost savings. A small position of students had some concerns about washing and size/discomfort.

Overall:

The findings overwhelmingly show that the menstrual health educational intervention very effectively improved students' knowledge, confidence and attitudes related to puberty and menstrual health. An area for improvement is the reinforcement of key points to prevent knowledge attrition. While positive changes in perceptions and confidence in communication were largely maintained, some declines were observed in knowledge, suggesting the need for ongoing support and education, which DfG is poised to do through multi-year programming. The findings also provide valuable insights into menstrual experiences of menstruating students prior to the program and how this was impacted through the use of DfG washable pad Kits, which largely positively impacted girls' menstrual experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The DfG Program has been very successful in achieving its intended outcomes within menstrual health in Ratanakiri province. Areas for learning and integration into future programming is as follows:

For Knowledge Retention and Reinforcement:

- **Continue to implement booster sessions:** Continue to conduct periodic follow-up sessions (e.g., quarterly or bi-annually) to reinforce key concepts, particularly those showing significant attrition (age of onset, menstruation/cycle duration, female anatomy, fertile period). These sessions could be shorter and more focused than the initial intervention.
- **Integrate content into existing national MoEYS curriculum:** Incorporate puberty and menstruation education into relevant subjects like science, health, and social studies to provide ongoing exposure and reinforcement.
- **Continue to utilize diverse learning methods:** DfG's lessons effectively employ a variety of teaching techniques, including interactive activities, games, worksheets, pictorial banners and group work. Other ideas that could be integrated include adding videos and peer-to-peer discussions, to cater to different learning styles and enhance engagement even further.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Maintaining Positive Perceptions and Attitudes:

- **Continue open discussions:** Encourage teachers to facilitate ongoing open discussions about menstruation in a safe and supportive environment to reinforce positive attitudes and reduce stigma.
- **Continue to involve parents and community:** Continue to engage parents and the wider community in education efforts for continued supportive and informed environment.
- **Empower student leaders:** Identify and train student leaders to act as peer educators and advocates for menstrual health, promoting open communication and positive attitudes. Work with school directors and teachers to implement this.

For Menstrual Products and Experiences (Specifically Regarding DfG Pads):

- **Increase time spent on DfG pad demonstration:** DfG provides comprehensive training on the proper use, washing, and care of DfG pads including addressing concerns about washing, drying, and potential discomfort with demonstrations and some hands-on practice. As 18% of girls were hesitant to try the Kit as they were unsure how to use it, DfG can increase hands-on practice and encourage teachers to check in on the students over time to provide support and additional demonstrations when needed.
- **Address changing facility concerns:** Advocate for improved and accessible changing facilities in schools, considering the specific needs of students using washable pads.
- **Address seasonality:** Develop strategies to address challenges related to drying washable pads during the rainy season, such as providing drying racks or exploring alternative drying methods.



THANK YOU!



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