

## ARTICLE REVIEWED

### 'It Always Gets Pushed Aside:' Qualitative Perspectives on Puberty and Menstruation Education in U.S. Schools

Schmitt, M. L., Gruer, C., Hagstrom, C., Ekua Adenu-Mensah, N., Nowara, A., Keeley, K., & Sommer, M. (2022). "It always gets pushed aside:" Qualitative perspectives on puberty and menstruation education in USA schools. *Frontiers in Reproductive Health*, 4, 1018217.

#### THE PROBLEM

Adolescent girls in the U.S. often receive insufficient education on menstrual health and lack knowledge on the practical aspects of managing a period. Evidence highlights that many older adolescent girls and young women wish they had more guidance and information about menstruation, especially as they begin adolescence. In the U.S., menstrual education is often overlooked, and it is rarely evaluated. Therefore, there is a need to better understand how adolescent girls – and the adults who support them – experience the challenges of receiving menstruation and puberty education in school.



#### Research Summary

This study examined the insights into the challenges of receiving menstruation and puberty education in schools. This qualitative research included Black and Latina girls ages 15–19 and adults working with them in three U.S. cities to explore girls' experiences with menstruation within family contexts and in school environments. Findings indicated that there is difficulty in delivering the content as well as lack of engaging educational materials. Teachers, counsellors and administrators also indicated that families and schools often disagree about who should take responsibility in providing puberty and sexual health.

#### Conclusion

Many adolescent girls in the United States are not prepared to manage puberty and menstrual health with confidence, and there is a need to develop menstruation and pubertal health education in schools. Therefore, training sessions related to menstruation and puberty education should be provided for instructors. Improving school engagement and supporting parents is also important to ensure the best learning experiences for girls.

#### Key Takeaway

There is a gap in practical and inclusive puberty and menstruation education in some U.S. schools. Girls often utilize the internet to fill this gap, but the misinformation highlights the need for school-based education. Training educators and providing practical curriculum are essential to support the provision of this education.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Jones, S. C., & Baldwin, M. K. (2025). Menstrual health education: school health curriculum topics by grade level recommended by specialized medical professionals in menstrual health clinics. *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*, 38(1), 39-44.