



Opinion: Menstruation One of the Oldest Non-Issues

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The Planet Earth is a magical place where thousands of animal and plant species co-inhabit. It overflows with life. All living things share characteristics as movement, respiration, sensitivity, growth, reproduction, excretion, and nutrition. The organisms who have similarity between those characteristics and can breed with each other producing fertile offspring they belong to the same species.

Human beings are not the species with the greatest physical power; however, they are the ones with the greatest capacity to create, learn, modify and survive. To perpetuate life, at a certain point of their growth, human bodies with female anatomy menstruate, regardless of where they live, religion, ethnicity, culture, academic background. Menstruation; period; mens; período; menstruação; miesięczka; okres; menstruacja; εμμηνόρροια; j'ai mes choses; regla; hedhi; kibada; omwezi; mahawari; pali... are different words for a common process which involves bleeding, perhaps the reason why menstruation is one of the oldest non-subjects among humanity.

In mammals, embryological development take place inside the maternal uterus and during the first steps of that development, nutrients are fed from the uterine epithelium. So, when not needed, this tissue and blood are released during menstruation. It is not impure, dirty or toxic!

Even nowadays, some girls when experienced menarche don't understand this natural process feel conditioned not to go to school, play, pray or cook. They feel alone, sad, locked down and with ashamed, avoid talking about it.

And what now? What is happening to me? I just want this to disappear. These are examples of some of the girl's

common questions. That is the point where someone nearby should explain that there is no need to change their lifestyle, way of thinking or acting, just because their body has started menstruating.

Traditionally regarded as a sign of womanhood, menstruation does not define the sexual behavior of women and people with female organs. The first menstruation cycle is a sign that the body is preparing to conceive new lives. It is part of the normal growth of a healthy body and it does not prevent from going to school, playing, cooking or praying.

Throughout life, there is a period of about 40 years in which menstruator bodies will cyclically bleed, since Menarche-the first menstruation, between 11 and 16 years old; until Menopause-with the last menstruation, around 50 years old.

Menstruation has always been present in the human species and is common to all people, but it is still a target of incomprehension, inequality and discrimination. It is important to increase the female reproductive system literacy, regarding internal and external morphology, physiology and hormonal regulation, to better understand behavior and body changes. Only with this increase of knowledge it is possible to minimize discrimination and taboos that persist for millennia. Also, the increase in literacy gives competence for a reasoned choice of hygiene awareness procedures, namely in the choice between the different sanitary products.

We are part of a world that works at different rhythms, we live in different ways, and we have different cultures. But, although menstruation is common to all and fundamental to the reproduction of the species, it doesn't impose

reproduction or marriage. Our cultures are different, but the respect for all human beings must always be preserved and come before religion, culture or wealth.

Menstruation is not only a "female" issue since we are not all binary people. The treasure of difference is part of the greatness of the human species. The intelligence, knowledge and acceptance are characteristics from our species and have to be present so that we can evolve and stop pointing differences and discriminating because of menstruation. The acceptance of differences, promotes tolerance; respect and humanity.

To understand menstruation deeply and clearly, we have

to go beyond dominant preconceptions and not accept the social expectation that menstruation is a topic to be kept to oneself. Menstruation is natural; it must be an issue and not a taboo!

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