Menstruation and Development Outcomes among Schoolgirls in Africa

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Empowering Women

- Key to economic development
- Gender empowerment focal strategy among NGOs
- Consumer marketing multinationals
- Media
Why Menstruation & Girls’ Education?

- Female education, especially at the secondary level, positively affects:
  - National economic activity
  - Fertility rates
  - Infant mortality
  - Child nutrition
  - Disease transmission
Pilot study: Ghana

- Schoolgirls aged 12-18 from four villages in Ghana

- Measures
  - School attendance/performance: Daily attendance records, enrolment, and course performance measures.
  - Demographic, health and family information, attitudes towards education.
  - Pre and post-surveys: menstrual knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.
  - Interim monthly visits: structured interviews, short surveys regarding pad use and disposal
# School Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Pre intervention attendance (percent mean, SD)</th>
<th>Midpoint of intervention attendance (percent mean, SD)</th>
<th>Post intervention attendance (percent mean, SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pads–with–Education</td>
<td>Periurban</td>
<td>82.27 (28.05)</td>
<td>90.58 (11.20)</td>
<td>90.93 (19.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pads–with–Education</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>80.68 (14.73)</td>
<td>91.91 (5.41)</td>
<td>91.09 (9.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education only</td>
<td>Periurban</td>
<td>78.03 (26.25)</td>
<td>78.96 (19.70)</td>
<td>91.36 (8.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Periurban</td>
<td>88.43 (13.44)</td>
<td>82.14 (13.62)</td>
<td>83.21 (13.91)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attendance

Absenteeism reduced by an average of 11%: retrieves over one week per term (6.6 school days)
Findings

- Pads-with-education sites increased attendance during the trial.
- Education-only also increased in attendance but took longer to manifest.
- No significant difference in improvement between rural and peri-urban sites.
- Wellbeing indicators suggest that pads-with-education may improve confidence and concentration more so than education only sites.
- All treatment sites showed improvement in attitudes towards education.
Sanitary Pad Project Development: Uganda

- 560 schoolgirls across 8 villages in Uganda
- Schools randomized to one of four conditions
  - Control (no intervention)
  - AFRIpads + Education
  - AFRIpads only
  - Education only

- Measures
  - School attendance
  - Demographic, health and family information, attitudes towards education.
  - Pre and post-surveys: menstrual knowledge, attitudes and behaviours.
  - Semi-structured interviews
Thank You

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