



Easy
Read

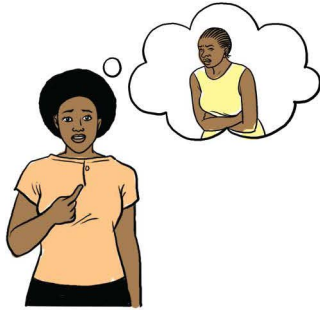
Looking at how Tanzanian girls with disabilities deal with menstrual pain.





In this Easy Read document, hard words are in **bold**. We explain what these words mean in the sentence after we have used them.

Introduction



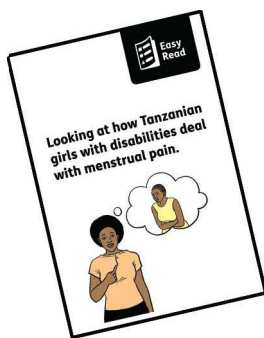
This **study** looks at how girls with disabilities, who live in Tanzania, deal with **menstrual pain** and **menstruation** in their daily lives.



A **study** is where people spend time collecting information to find out new things.



Menstrual pain is pain a girl may feel when she gets her period. When a girl is on her period it is called **menstruation**.



This information will tell you more about the study and what was discovered.

About the study

The study collected information on how girls with disabilities feel about:

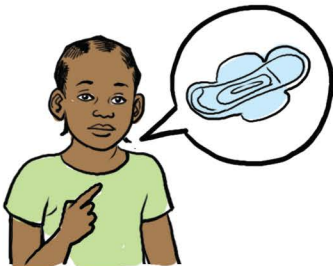


- Carrying out daily activities while they are menstruating.



- Menstruation in general.

The information was collected by:



- Asking girls with disabilities to tell a story about how a girl with disabilities might feel while she is menstruating.



- Talking to women with disabilities who are leaders.



The information collected was looked at by Tanzanian people with disabilities who helped to carry out this study.

What was discovered?

From the discussions with women with disabilities who are leaders, the study found that in Tanzania:



- Girls with disabilities in are often left out or ignored in their local community.



- Not many girls with disabilities carry on with their education into college or university.



- There is in general less support and care for girls with disabilities in local communities.



- Many girls with disabilities do not feel good about themselves.



- Girls with disabilities are often not allowed to make their own decisions.



- Girls with disabilities are not able to deal with their menstrual pain because:



- They are not taught how to.



- Their carers do not know how to.

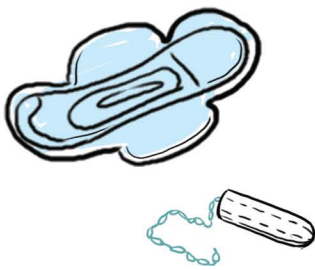


- Girls with disabilities do not know much about menstruation in general as they are not taught about it.



- When they are menstruating, girls with disabilities are often:

- Kept inside their house.



- Left without products used for menstruation, like sanitary towels.



- **Restrained.** This is when someone is stopped from moving freely.

From the stories collected from the girls, the study found that in Tanzania:



- Girls with disabilities were not able to get medicine for their menstrual pain - this is often because it is too expensive.



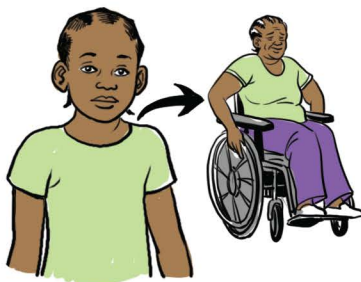
- Schools do not teach enough about menstruation or do not teach in a way that everyone can understand.



- Menstrual pain is often ignored by girls with disabilities and their families. This is because in Tanzania it is thought that:



- All girls should be able to complete all of their daily tasks when they are in pain.



- Being in pain is part of being a girl and becoming a woman.



- Girls who do not forget about or ignore their pain are lazy.



- Many people see menstruation as unclean and something to be embarrassed about.



- Girls with disabilities do not have access to good and safe products used for menstruation.



- When girls with disabilities are menstruating, they sometimes avoid doing everyday things because they feel embarrassed.



- Some girls with disabilities are scared that if men knew they had started menstruating, then they are more likely to be **sexually abused**.

Sexual abuse is when someone does something sexual to you, or makes you do something sexual, when you have not agreed to it.



- Menstrual pain is different for every girl and can affect different body parts.

Understanding what was discovered



The study shows that girls with disabilities in Tanzania deal with **disablism**.

Disablism is when people with disabilities are left out or ignored by people and organisations.

This causes girls with disabilities to:



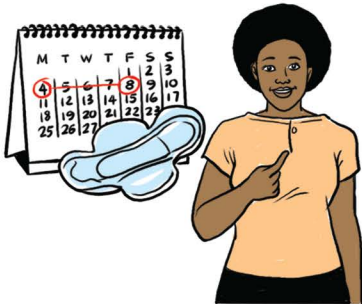
- Not be able to deal with their menstrual pain.



- Think negatively about menstruation.

What changes could be made?

In Tanzania:



- More people in need to understand that dealing with menstruation and pain can be difficult for girls with disabilities.



- Girls with disabilities should be able to deal with their menstrual pain.



- Local communities and families should make sure they are not making girls with disabilities feel bad about themselves.



- More studies should be done about whether some disabilities cause more pain during menstruation.



- More people need to understand that menstrual pain is real and hurts.



In general, we need to listen to people with disabilities more.

Help and support



You can get support if someone is violent to you. Please call the National Child Helpline: 166.

This study was carried out by Virpi Mesiäislehto, Magdaleena Lehmuskoski, Hisayo Katsui, Richard Sambaiga and Tanzanian people with disabilities.

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