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Educating Indigenous Populations in Rural Guatemala about Menstrual Hygiene Management in Collaboration with Days For Girls International

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First and Last Name/s of Presenters

Molly Barker, Alicia Buynovsky, Stefanie Falcone, Julia Gonfiantini, Allison Johnston, and Meghan Liquindoli



- Days for girls is a non-profit organization with a mission and vision to create a world with dignity, health, and opportunity through menstrual care and health education (International, 2018). They work towards creating a more dignified, humane, and equal world through advocacy, reproductive health awareness, education, and accessible feminine hygiene.
- Research has shown that many girls have to miss school or resort to using rags, mattress stuffing, banana leaves, feathers, cow dung and more, to manage their menstruation (International, 2018).
- The Days for Girls provide women and girls with a safe, washable, and long-lasting alternative along with health education on their female body, menstruation, and reproductive system (International, 2018).
- This kit lasts 2-3 years and will help to replace disposable pads which comes to an average of 360 pads. This program enables women to earn an income and ensure program continuity (International, 2018).

- The pregnancy rate for young girls in Guatemala has been increasing over the past decade with adolescent (under-20) birth rate of 114 per 1,000 women in rural areas (Valladares, 2012).
- The average age of a woman at the birth of her first child is 21.2 years, compared with the global average of 25-29 (The World Factbook, n.d.).
- 29.1% of Guatemalan adolescent girls aged 15-19 have an unmet need for family planning (World Health Organization, 2017)

The purpose of our project is to educate young females about menstrual hygiene and management, female anatomy, and reproduction cycle.

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In collaboration with Days for Girls International, students from the College of Nursing at Sacred Heart University implemented a public health project to educate girls in Guatemala about the phases of puberty, menstruation, and the reproductive system. Through the use of teamwork and collaboration with Days for Girls International, this project allowed us to demonstrate and distribute the use of menstruation kits to the girls in the community of Santa Maria de Jesus.

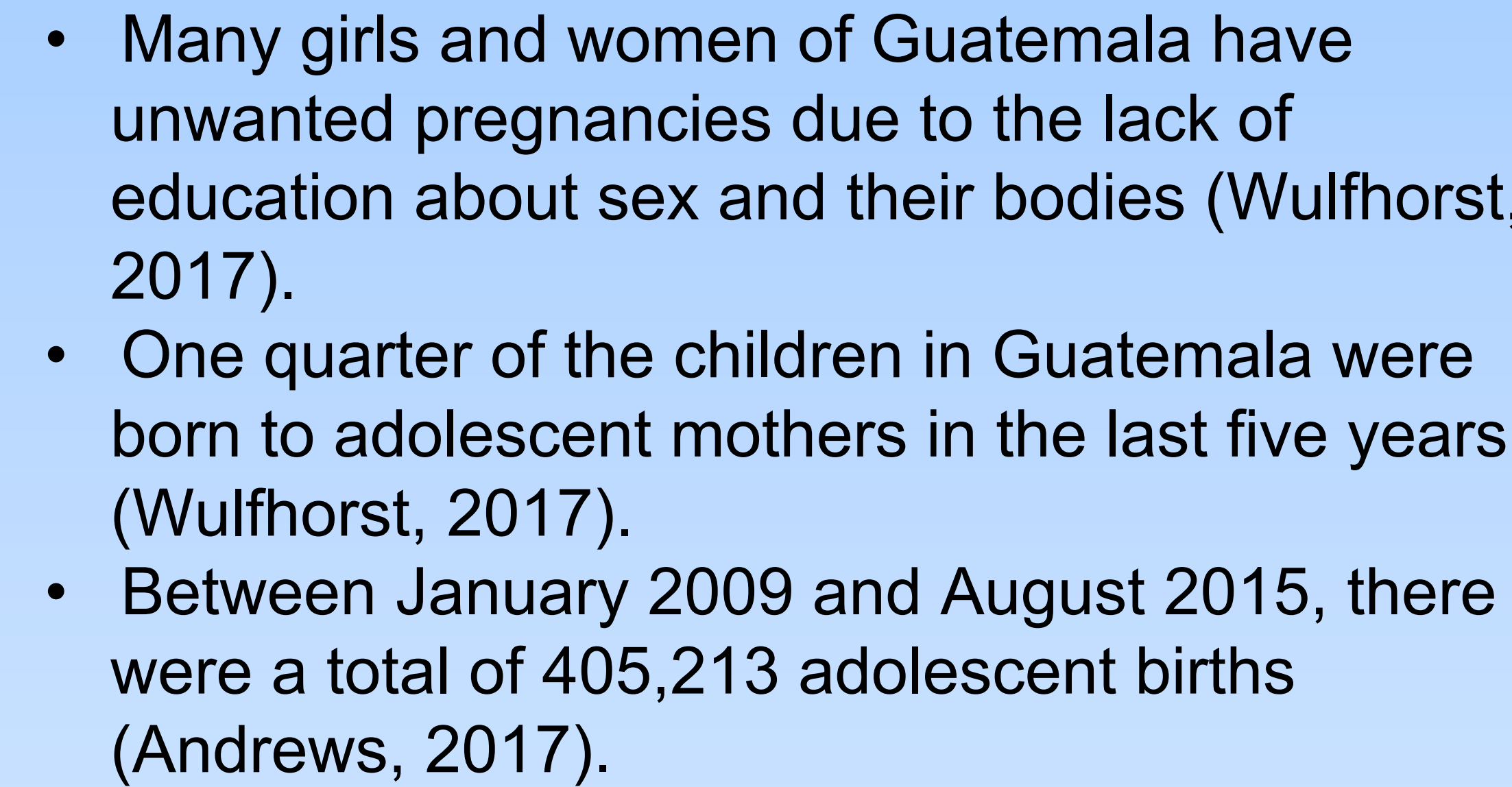
The poster served as a visual teaching tool and helped facilitate a classroom discussion. The school girls, 10 to 14, were able to see informative images that highlighted the signs and symptoms during menstruation, anatomical diagrams, and the Tanner stages of puberty during a 45-minute teaching session by the nursing students and faculty, with the aid of an interpreter. Education included a demonstration on use of the menstrual kit use and provided an opportunity for students to ask questions.



A group of students, mostly 6th and 7th graders, receiving and being educated on their Days for Girls kits

We provided education and distributed menstrual kits to girls in two locations in Guatemala. The girls had some, yet limited knowledge about the menstrual cycle and female anatomy. The girls were eager to learn about their bodies and expressed gratitude for their kits. The nursing students and advisors are confident that this project will continue to be implemented during in future Guatemala clinical immersions.

The significance to nursing is improvement of population health. The primary purpose is to educate about the female anatomy, including menstruation, hygiene, and conception. With this education and the Days for Girls kit, the school age girls will have increased knowledge about their bodies.



All of the kits used for this project were made and donated by Days for Girls International.

In conclusion, the teaching and menstruation kits provided will improve the health of young girls in Guatemala. The nursing students and advisors are confident that this project will continue to be implemented in the future medical mission trips.



This project would have been impossible without the support and donations from Days for Girls International. Thank you for including Sacred Heart University to help change the lives of young women in Guatemala. Thank you to IDC Missions for hosting and guiding us through our clinical immersion trip.

