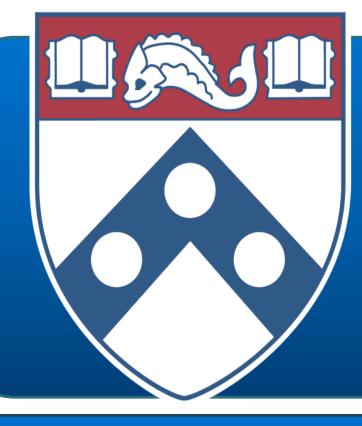
A Multimodal Approach to Understanding the Barriers and Facilitators to **Adolescent Menstrual Health Equity** Shelby Davies, MD¹; Kaja Darien, BA¹; Sarah Wood, MD, MSHP^{1,2}; Deborah Thomas, PhD²; Nadia Dowshen, MD, MSHP^{1,2}



Background

- Inadequate access to menstrual products, known as period poverty, is a key health disparity in adolescents.
- However, inequities persist even when youth can afford products.
- Few studies have explored the lived experiences of adolescents who menstruate through a menstrual equity framework.

Objective

• This policy-oriented, health services research studied how social factors, organizational structures and processes, health systems, and personal behaviors affect the physical and emotional experiences of menstruation for youth.

Methods

- Qualitative study consisting of individual interviews of menstruating youth ages 13-24, recruited from an urban academic medical center.
- Inclusion criteria included access to a smartphone and either Medicaid insurance or endorsement of period poverty at prior medical visit.
- We conducted semi-structured interviews that used youth video diaries in a visual elicitation exercise to prompt discussion.
- Data were coded by 2 investigators employing modified grounded theory.
- Data from the interviews and video diaries were triangulated to validate and enrich findings.







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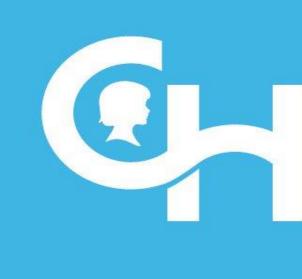
		Results	
Table 1. Participant Characteristics.		Table 2. Themes and sample quotes from the interviews.	
(N=20)	n (%)	Themes	Sample Qu
Gender	19 (2.2, 15-24)	Normalization of menstruation	"If somebody said to me, what's one periods, I would say, the mental stig
Female Male Non-Binary Black/African American	4 (20)	Dysphoria around association with womanhood	"I was told that I was a woman nov don't even think Cis women like bein years o
Caucasian Hispanic Muslim	5 (25) 1 (5) 5 (25)	Limitations to education	"There were times when I couldn't r to school because
Medicaid Insured	18 (90) 5 (25)	Lack of education perpetuates stigma	"Knowledge is powerIf you provide know. And if not, then we have the
*Needed menstrual products but did not have the money to buy them. Figure 1. Word cloud. ¹		Desire for education decoupled from sex	"I feel like they should just teach ab femalesThey really deserve to know "When I got my periodI still was p wants to think about sex whe
bleeding eduration regular products people menths control	basically understand females females strual strual better dectared	Social media as key source of health education	"I've learned much more about the media like TikTok and stuff, way
		Financial burden of menstruation	"Nobody really talks about how mu buying p
person Ξ		Public access to menstrual products is critical	"If I'm out in public, it's kind of like I not gonna find
actually chifferent School are different school are	inutes ound proposed ficult of the second proposed ghilling a second proposed of the second	Desire for menstrual products in schools	"I do think they should give it away in the bathroom, so you don't have bathroom, too, because
		Medical providers needed as advocates	"I do believe that doctors should as don't have easy
¹ Audio from video diaries was extract in NVivo software word cloud function	from video diaries was extracted and entered o software word cloud function. ¹ Mean interrater agreement across all codes 0.99 (SD 0.03).		

• This innovative, youth-centered, multimodal study is one of the first to use a menstrual equity framework to qualitatively explore the lived experiences of menstruation among adolescents and young adults in the United States.

• Our findings are consistent with survey data that youth want more education and advocacy around menstrual equity.

• Our research team and participant-led youth advisory board will share these data with key stakeholders via a youthproduced video and evidence-to-action brief to inform policy and best practice guidelines.

Conclusions



uotes(s)

- ne thing you would change about igma that society has on periods."
- ow, which made me feel worse...I eing told that when they're like 12 old."
- move or get up and I couldn't go e it was so bad."
- de the knowledge, the people will the stigma that we have now."
- about it especially to the young now what is happening to them."
- playing with dolls and stuff. Who nen they get their period?"
- he body and people off of social / more than I have in school."
- nuch money people put out into pads."
- I have to have a pad on me or I'm nd anything."
- y for free, and I think it should be ve to ask for them...in the men's se of trans students."
- ask about it in case some people access to it."

