

Interim report

Date of sending out the form:

Monday, May 10, 2021

Contact person/applicant:

L. Medina-Perucha

Country

Spain

E-mail

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Title of the granted project

Menstrual health and period poverty among young people who menstruate in the Barcelona metropolitan area (Spain)

Amount granted by the ESC (in euro)

9000

Initial funding (part of the grant received already) in euro:

6750

Final amount to be paid by ESC (in euro):

2250

Project number:

P-2019-A-01

Allocated mentor:

P.Baraitser

Date project actually started:

Monday, September 2, 2019

Planned date of completion:

Thursday, September 1, 2022

Have there been any problems or issues with starting or continuing this project? If so, what impact will that have on your planned completion date?

We had to suspend the project due to the COVID19 pandemic. We discussed this suspension with the ESC and my mentor (Paula Baraitser) and submitted a modified protocol for its approval to conduct the project during the COVID19 pandemic. This suspension has had an impact on the planned completion date. The project was expected to end in September 2021 and will now be completed by September 2022.

Have you discussed the project status and any problems with your Mentor?

Yes, I discussed both the suspension and protocol changes with my mentor.

Please provide a synopsis of your findings and data so far (max 500 words)

Preliminary quantitative data indicate that 19,2% of participants (N=1.892) have had financial problems to access menstrual products, and 37,1% have been forced to buy cheaper products due to financial issues. 71,4% of participants considers that menstrual products are too expensive, and 84,9% states that taxes currently applied to menstrual products should be reduced. Besides, 83,1% of participants reported the need for political measures to be applied in the workplace to manage menstruation. The most popular measures were having the option to telework or having flexible working hours (71,3%), followed by being able to request menstrual paid leave (41,1%).

In relation to the use of menstrual products, 74,6% of people who menstruate used non-reusable menstrual products (regular menstrual pads and tampons). 58,8% reported the use of reusable menstrual products (menstrual cup, cloth menstrual pads, menstrual-proof underwear, among others). Also, 11,6% of participants used toilet paper and 4,3% used diapers for menstrual management. 4,6% practiced free-bleeding (no use of menstrual products). Besides, 94,3% of participants reported having used menstrual products for more time than the recommended.

Despite wanting to access health services for menstruation, 20% of participants had not had a consultation with a healthcare professional linked to menstruation. On the other hand, 15,8% of participants had access complementary or alternative medicine services for menstrual management. In relation to menstrual pain, 7,9% of people who menstruate considered intense menstrual pain "normal" and 3,8% believed that healthcare consultations were not necessary for menstrual pain.

As for menstrual education and discrimination, 12,6% people who menstruate did not know what menstruation was and 47% had partial information on menstruation and the menstrual cycle before menarche. In addition, 48,7% declared not feeling ready to menstruate at the time of menarche. Participants reported to have learned about menstruation from their families (69,5%), at school (40,4%) and from friends (35,5%). Last but not least, 41,5% of people who menstruate reported having felt judged or discriminated against linked to menstruating.

On the other hand, preliminary qualitative findings (N=34) suggest that patriarchal and androcentric social structures are linked to how menstruation is understood and experienced, as well as have a profound impact on menstrual health and menstrual inequity. Participants expressed how they experience internal tensions between the lack of knowledge on the menstrual cycle and menstruation and the need to reduce uncertainty and understand their own bodies and health. Menstruation is still considered a taboo topic and there is much stigma attached to menstruating, as well as experiences of discrimination (at school, in the workplace and society in general). The medicalisation of menstruating bodies was one of the topics that emerged in the interviews with participants, as managing their menstrual cycles and menstruation came, according to them, way too often accompanied by prescriptions for hormonal contraception or painkillers to manage menstrual pain. Most participants were unaware of their own menstrual alterations. Among those who had identified menstrual alterations healthcare consultations had been mostly unsatisfactory and in some occasions had accessed alternative services. It was common among participants to have resisted to the use of medication and refused to attend healthcare services as they expected to be dismissed and judged.

Please provide a current budget on how much you have spent to date. Receipts may be requested.

10€ vouchers & postage (as most interviews were conducted by phone) for qualitative study participants: 328,70€

Travel expenses: 11,35€

Transcriptions of the qualitative study (due to be paid): 5262,34€

Add any other information you feel we should have at this stage.

We have completed data collection for the qualitative study with people who menstruate. We are currently collecting data for the quantitative study with people who menstruate. Data collection will mid/end of June 2021. Qualitative data are being analysed so the findings presented are preliminary. Similarly, we have conducted a preliminary data analysis for the quantitative data collected so far. The other two studies will be conducted between September 2021 and September 2022.

Manuscripts for peer-reviewed publications for the first two studies are planned to be submitted by summer 2021. We are also preparing a press release to be made public this week. I am also in touch with several journalists and politicians who are interested in collaborating and sharing the results from this study.

Thank you very much for your support.

Full Name

Laura Medina-Perucha

Date

Monday, May 10, 2021

Questions? ESC Central Office: info@escrh.eu / Tel. 0032 2 582 08 52

Once received and assessed, you will be contacted regarding the final payment.

Type a question

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