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HYSTERECTOMY IS A BOON OR A BANE TO THE INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED GIRLS

"When you are a mother you are never really alone in your thoughts. A mother always has to think twice once for herself and once for her child"- Sophia Loren

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INTRODUCTION

Motherhood is one of the beauty and precious gift given by the god to woman. But is it possible for all women is a question mark. The major reason might be two, one is sterility and the other may be the environment. But for the Intellectually Disabled girls it is not so. This is mainly due to low IQ, social rejection and lack of adaptive behaviour. But sometimes they are illegally prone for sexual abuse and tend to carry the child. This affects the family and the victims in many ways. So in order to avoid or prevent this issue parents tend to take up some preventive measures (i.e.) Hysterectomy. But it is in turn it becomes cause for the abuse and for the health problems. Hence this issue is taken up for this presentation.

Sterilisation of girls and woman with intellectual disability has always been contentious as it raises issues such as womanhood, being an adult, not an eternal child, sexuality, menstruation, pregnancy parenting and rape. There is a concept that the intellectually disabled women are unable to take care of themselves they must not have children; they may not able to manage her menstruation etc.

It is true that with intellectually disabled women are more likely to be sexually used than more sophisticated assertive, non disabled women. However it must be admitted that protecting a woman from pregnancy is not the same as protecting her from exploitation. A sterile woman is

just vulnerable to exploitation, perhaps more so because there will be no pregnancy to tell that she is sexually used, the alternative is to develop close communication and to teach self protection skill to the intellectually disabled girls.

OBJECTIVES:

- I. To insist that hysterectomy is not the only way to protect the intellectually disabled girls from abuse or from getting pregnant.
- II. To provide awareness to the parents to seek for better ways to cope with menstruation and abuse instead of hysterectomy.
- III. To provide awareness to parents and care takers about teaching or training the daughters in the areas of self protection skill, sex education and menstrual hygiene or management.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Passer (1984) conducted a study of parents in Cincinnati, 10 65% of parents of severely retarded women had thought of sterilization as had 63% of parents of moderately retarded women. Two thirds of these parents had difficulty dealing with menstrual hygiene. Parents of mildly retarded women were three times more likely to consider tubal ligation than hysterectomy. Parents of severely retarded were three times more likely to choose hysterectomy. The most common primary reason given by sterilization seekers was protection from pregnancy, but 60% of parents seeking hysterectomy gave "elimination of menses and related problems" as the primary reason. In another clinic at the University Of Tennessee College Of Medicine, 43% of patients presented seeking hysterectomies. Fifty percent of those were for menstrual hygiene. This data shows that parents have historically sought hysterectomy more readily in patients with more severe retardation and perhaps wrongly overlooked other medical treatment options.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

According to the Indian census, women constitutes 42.45% of the total population of persons with disabilities in india.Despit6e the numbers their violence remains unheard and the existing legal framework fails to address specific problems faced by the women with disabilities. Nowadays the parents of the intellectually disabled girls are going straight for sterilisation procedures rather than existing and viable options, to help menstruation and contraception. This

is because the parents and care givers are not made aware of these and discouraged from understanding their effectiveness parents also stress that they are overwhelmed by the demands of caring of their daughters. Who around d the –the-clock-care. In present condition even the normal girls need more awareness and protection to prevent them from abuse, so it is the need of an hour to insist the self protection skill, sex education and management of the menstrual hygiene instead of hysterectomy.

HYSTERECTOMY:

Definition

Hysterectomy is the surgical removal of the uterus. In a total hysterectomy, the uterus and cervix are removed. In some cases, the fallopian tubes and ovaries are removed along with the uterus (called hysterectomy with bilateral salpingo-oophorectomy). In a subtotal hysterectomy, only the uterus is removed. In a radical hysterectomy, the uterus, cervix, ovaries, oviducts, lymph nodes, and lymph channels are removed. The type of hysterectomy performed depends on the reason for the procedure. In all cases, menstruation stops and a woman loses the ability to bear children.

REASONS FOR HYSTERECTOMIES

Hysterectomies are most often done for the following reasons:

Uterine fibroids, Endometriosis, Uterine prolapsed, Cancer, Hyperplasia and the other reasons why hysterectomies are done include chronic pelvic pain, heavy bleeding and chronic pelvic inflammatory disease.

PROBLEMS DUE TO HYSTERECTOMY

According to the HERS Foundation, hysterectomy significantly increases women's risks for:

- Heart disease
- Osteoporosis
- Pain and immobility of the bones, joints, and muscles
- Pelvic organ displacement, including the bladder and bowels

- Urinary tract infections, as well as problems with urinary frequency and incontinence
- Digestive disorders, including chronic constipation
- Chronic fatigue and exhaustion
- Changes in body odour
- Personality changes which may include many conditions from a blunting of emotions to depression, irritability, reclusiveness, anger, and suicidal thoughts
- Sexual problems that affect desire, arousal, and sensation and may include painful sexual intercourse and vaginal damage.

PROBLEMS DUE TO HYSTERECTOMY IN INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGED GIRLS:

- The operation stops menstruation and the girl can never bear children, but it can also cause hormonal imbalance leading to mood swings.
- Hysterectomy will make a woman for incapable of becoming pregnant but it will also hide sexual abuse. (Sadly pregnancy may sometimes be the only evidence of sexual abuse in institutional settings).
- It is a disadvantage for intellectually Disabled girls but it is advantage for the abusers or the abuse.
- A woman with Intellectually Disabled remains a full human being, despite her disability. The rights (bodily integrity, personal autonomy and sexual and reproductive health of these woman cannot be sacrificed at the altar of convenience.
- It prevents the evidence in the care of victims to legally.

CONCLUSION:

From the above information we can come to conclude that hysterectomy is a bane girls. The reason may be the basic quality of women is not respected. From this the rights of the disabled stressed in all walks of life, is not given due importance. Above all the culture of our nation is not preserved because of this sensitive issue. Hence it is proved it is a bane for the intellectually disabled girls.

RECOMMENDATION:

- Hysterectomy is not the only solution to the mentally retarded girls to take care of themselves from personal hygiene; instead of hysterectomy we can train them in personal hygiene including menstrual care through repeated and innovative methods.
- Intellectually disabled girls can never be protected from abuse only with hysterectomy, instead of that we can train some self protection skill to them.
- Government can provide security to children from sexual and physical abuse in all the homes for the mentally handicapped.
- Sex education can be taught to the children including the gender awareness.
- Changing the form and content of training for teachers and caretakers so that biases against women's bodies and menstruation are countered
- Providing adequate undergarments and measures for managing hygienic way of menstruation
- Government can provide physical, intellectual and psychological stimulation to intellectually challenged children without any preconceived biases
- Our government can provide, training to the teachers and parents. It can also try to open many day care centres and counselling centres to the parents' in order to support them from their stress.
- Awareness should be created among the parents to protect their daughters from abuse and also to know about the laws available in our country to punish the abusers.

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