

# Menstruation & Menstrual Hygiene Management for Adolescents With Autism Spectrum Disorder From the Perspectives of School Personnel

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**IMPORTANCE:** For students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) that menstruate, a part of their school routine may include addressing menstrual hygiene management. Menstruation and menstrual hygiene management for individuals with ASD is an area that occupational therapy practitioners are able to address (AOTA, 2020). The perspectives of school personnel on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management for students with ASD may contribute to the already limited body of knowledge on this vital topic (Cummins et al., 2018; Huseth-Zosel & Secor-Turner, 2022).

**OBJECTIVE:** This study examined the experiences school personnel encounter with regard to menstruation and menstrual hygiene management with students with ASD.

**METHOD:** Using a phenomenological approach, semi structured interviews with 5 school personnel of students with ASD in grades 4 and up were performed over Zoom. Data analysis included interview transcription, coding, and development of themes following the six phase thematic analysis framework by Braun and Clarke (2006).

**PARTICIPANTS:** 5 school personnel with 69 combined years of experience working in the schools with students with ASD were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling.

**RESULTS:** Several themes emerged from the interviews including: school personnel work with more males with ASD than females with ASD, there is a lack of knowledge on occupational therapy practitioner's role in menstruation, and the need for training opportunities for school personnel.

**CONCLUSIONS/RELEVANCE:** It is within the scope of school based OT practice to address menstruation and menstrual hygiene management with students with ASD; however, it is often overlooked. The lived experiences of school personnel explicated from the interviews provide key components to consider when working with students with ASD.

**IMPACT STATEMENT:** These findings initiate the discussion and indicate the need for future research on menstruation and menstrual hygiene management and OT.

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