

UH CODE RED: Menstrual Hygiene Needs of Individuals on the University of Houston Campus

Sarosha Momin, Faith Amerson, Justine Samaroo, Ana Morales, Priya Thomas, & Laura Lee

ABSTRACT

- Menstruation should be seen as a normal bodily function because most individuals are not able to control this natural process.
- Our study will be specifically examining the overall menstrual hygiene needs of individuals on the University of Houston (UH) campus.
- Individuals on the UH campus will be examined through voluntary self-administered QR code surveys.
- Restroom locations on the UH campus will include boxes with free feminine hygiene products, which individuals can utilize at no cost.
- To validate that there is a need and appreciation for free menstrual hygiene products, our study will formulate a different survey after two weeks to assess this.
- We hypothesize that most individuals will prefer and appreciate free feminine hygiene products; and will show genuine concern when there are no feminine hygiene products left in the box.

INTRODUCTION

- Feminine hygiene products are not available for free in campus restrooms.
- Menstrual products are as essential as other hygiene products, such as toilet paper, toilet seats, and soap, so they should be treated as such.
- The lack of accessible menstrual products can cause considerable inconveniences and emotional distress to those who need them.
- The financial burden is a factor in this issue for both the supplier and the students. The universities must find the budget to supply the products; the students must cut into their budget to purchase them.
- The few existing studies on campuses that have implemented programs with free feminine hygiene products in campus restrooms show success in improving the experience of menstruators.
- Previous studies are limited because either they did not assess the need for feminine hygiene products, provide feminine hygiene products, or validate the need for feminine hygiene products.
- Conclusions from our on-campus surveys will help demonstrate that feminine hygiene products in restrooms at the University of Houston are vital for the physical and mental well-being of many on campus.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this study is to:

- Assess the menstrual hygiene needs of individuals at the UH campus using the survey.
- Examine the feminine hygiene inventory data to conclude how much product is being used in specific restroom locations on the UH campus.
- Predict and confirm the level of concern and need around free menstrual hygiene products.

METHODS

- Developed a survey to assess the needs, preference, and attitudes regarding menstrual products from individuals at the UH campus.
- Allocated menstrual products to sixty different women’s or gender-neutral restrooms at the UH campus.
- 60 boxes for 20 buildings and 1 box in each of the restrooms
- 56 women's restrooms and 4 non-gendered restrooms a total of 60 restrooms
- Paired each box of menstrual products with a flyer that presented a QR code that could be scanned to take the survey.
- Periodically visited each bathroom three times a week to take inventory and restock menstrual products as needed.
- Formulated a different survey after 2 weeks of our previous method where we examined how individuals at the UH campus felt now that we had stopped stocking the bathrooms with menstrual products.
- Analyzed the results of both surveys.



DISCUSSION

FUTURE OF THE STUDY

- The future of the study will continue to assess the menstrual hygiene needs of individuals on campus.
- As we move forward, we intend to remove any remaining product in the menstrual boxes and replace them with a new survey.
- The new survey continues to assess the menstrual needs of individuals on campus from a different perspective of having no product available.
- The research is not done as survey questioning is still open.

LIMITATIONS

- Buildings that were contacted to participate in the study that did not respond were a limitation due to services already provided by different means and lack of time to await a response.
- Buildings that were already providing feminine hygiene products resulted in the removal of our product distribution.
- Other limitations include a finite number of responses to our survey, not all individuals taking the survey, and individuals not having access to the survey due to the flyer being taken down.
- Due to limited resources, we were unable to apply our services to all buildings across campus, this minimized our sample size as building selections were done under no controlling qualifications.