

A Comparison of Premenarcheal Expectations and Postmenarcheal Experiences in Chinese Early Adolescents

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The present study examined Chinese early adolescents' expectations and experiences of their first menstruation. It included 952 participants, 476 premenarcheal and 476 postmenarcheal girls matched by age and by grade level. Results showed that compared to experiences of postmenarcheal girls, premenarcheal girls anticipated more negative emotional responses and more severe menstrual symptoms at menarche. Premenarcheal and postmenarcheal girls did not differ in levels of self-esteem, gender-role identity, perceived physical attractiveness, and positive emotions to menarche. Compared to those who had their first menstruation on time or later, adolescent girls who reported an early onset of menarche reported more severe menstrual symptoms. However, the timing of menarche was unrelated to postmenarcheal girls' levels of self-esteem, gender-role identity, perceived physical attractiveness, and emotional experiences of menarche.

Keywords: *Chinese adolescents; premenarcheal; postmenarcheal; menarche*

Menarche is a woman's first menstruation and marks the beginning of her reproductive life. Many long-term menstrual-related physical, behavioral, and emotional reactions are related to women's expectations and experiences of menarche (Brooks-Gunn & Ruble, 1982; Fisher, Trieller, & Napolitano, 1989; Koff & Rierdan, 1996; Marvan, Vacio, & Espinosa-Hernandez, 2001; McGrory, 1990; Ruble & Brooks-Gunn, 1982; Woods, Dery, & Most, 1982). Cultural factors are among the most salient factors influencing women's menstrual attitudes and experiences (Brooks-Gunn, 1985; Chaturvedi &

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180