

What's the bloody big deal? How Australian workplaces and educational institutions can help break the menstrual taboo

May 30 2022, by Lauren Austin



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A team of multidisciplinary Western Sydney University researchers have launched a new white paper exploring how workplaces and educational

institutions can help break the menstrual taboo.

Released for World Menstrual Hygiene Day on 28 May, the "What's the bloody big deal?" white paper presents important evidence that changes are overdue to ensure that Australian girls, [women](#) and people who menstruate are supported to participate in [education](#) and work in their best capacity.

The white paper draws together experts from across Western Sydney University's Education and Work and Health and Well-being research themes. It is the work of a collective of passionate and skilled researchers jointly led by Dr. Sarah Duffy and Dr. Michelle O'Shea.

According to the research team, the taboo surrounding menstruation creates barriers for women when raising concerns or requesting changes that are needed to help them in managing their symptoms while at work.

Dr. Sarah Duffy, from the School of Business, noted that importantly the paper addresses why managing periods is a [public concern](#) in schools, workplaces and higher education.

"This is an issue that needs to be urgently and thoroughly addressed as we look to achieve widespread menstrual equity," said Dr. Duffy.

To meet these challenges, the paper draws on the experiences of participants and provides recommendations on policy and practice that can be implemented by schools and workplaces to better equip women with the resources they need to excel in their education and career.

It also puts forward a blueprint for organizations to collaborate with Western Sydney University to implement best practice and support their staff or students in relation to menstruation.

Dr. Michelle O'Shea, also from the School of Business, recognized the ongoing work and collaboration required to implement change.

"There is a very evident lack of care and concern amongst schools and local government when discussing the issues that the white paper presents," said Dr. O'Shea.

Dr. Mike Armour, from NICM Health Research Institute, further highlighted that these challenges are even more prevalent for women with endometriosis or other menstrual disorders.

"It is likely that we all know or care for someone who has endometriosis. It is an issue just as common as diabetes but despite its prevalence the funding is not adequate," said Dr. Armour.

More information: What's the Bloody Big Deal? How Australian workplaces and educational institutions can help break the menstrual taboo: www.westernsydney.edu.au/_dat...d_Workplaces_V.2.pdf

Provided by Western Sydney University

Citation: What's the bloody big deal? How Australian workplaces and educational institutions can help break the menstrual taboo (2022, May 30) retrieved 21 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-05-bloody-big-australian-workplaces-menstrual.html>

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