



Survey 2025

The weight of period poverty in Europe

European Survey Règles Élémentaires

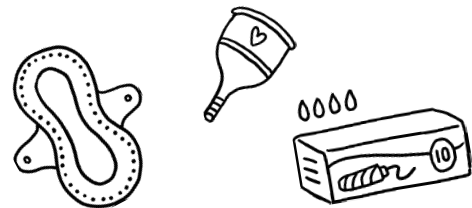
Rapport | 17th February 2025



Goals



Introduction



27 countries and nearly 112 million people who menstruate.

112 million people who are rarely, if ever, talked about.

Because while the European Union promotes equality and fair access to healthcare, it seems to overlook a key part of the equation : menstruation.

Period is a reality that affects not only health and equality, but also finances.

Every month, these **112 million** people must purchase menstrual products which prices are unregulated. For those with low or no income, heavy periods that require multiple packs, or households with several menstruating children, the cost quickly becomes a burden.

As a result, many go without — turning these basic necessities into what then become "luxury products."

There are many consequences, often hidden, and which can have lasting impacts on the daily lives of millions of women and people who menstruate.

From the persistence of menstrual stigma to the weight of period poverty and its impact on health, this barometer sheds light on an issue that has long remained invisible at the European level.

This barometer is a first step toward recognizing the shared inequalities experienced across Europe, and it calls for awareness and action.

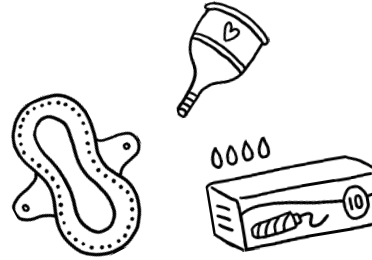
Tomorrow, we hope more Europeans — citizens and policymakers alike — will take up this cause, so that periods are never again a burden.



Justine Okolodkoff,

*Deputy Director, in charge of EU relations
at Règles Élémentaires*

Goals of the study



Règles Élémentaires
commissioned OpinionWay Healthcare to conduct
a study in the 27 countries of the EU.

The **goals** were as follow :

Measure perceptions around periods, and understand daily menstrual realities better

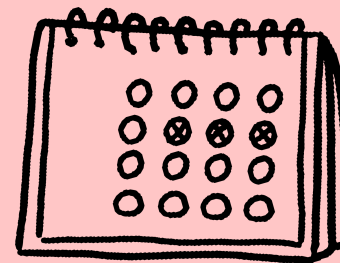
Get an overview of menstrual poverty in the EU



REGLES ELEMENTAIRES

is a French nonprofit organization that fights against menstrual poverty and the stigma surrounding periods. Founded in France in 2015 to address a long-overlooked issue, the organization has expanded across Europe in recent years. Today, in both France and Europe, it connects actors working for solidarity and equality, raises awareness and provides education on menstrual issues, and carries out advocacy efforts to change laws—aiming to end menstrual poverty and improve access to menstrual health.

Methodology



Methodology

Any full or partial publication must include the following full credit : *"OpinionWay survey for Règles Élémentaires"* and no part of the study may be used without this attribution.



A sample of **5,008** residents from the 27 European countries, aged 18 and over.
The sample was constructed using the quota method, based on gender, age, and region (NUTS) criteria.



The sample was surveyed using a self-administered online questionnaire via the **CAWI system** (Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing).



The interviews were conducted from **January 21 to 30, 2025**.
As a token of appreciation for their participation, panelists received incentives or chose to donate them to a suggested nonprofit organization of their choice.

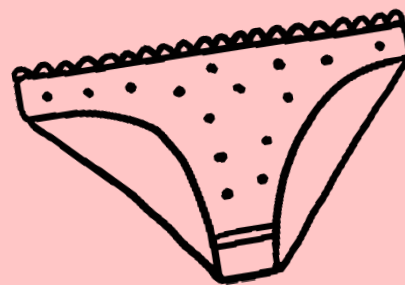


OpinionWay conducted this survey in accordance with the procedures and guidelines of the **ISO 20252** standard.



The results of this survey should be interpreted considering the margin of error: **0.6 to 1.4 points** at most for a sample of 5,000 respondents.

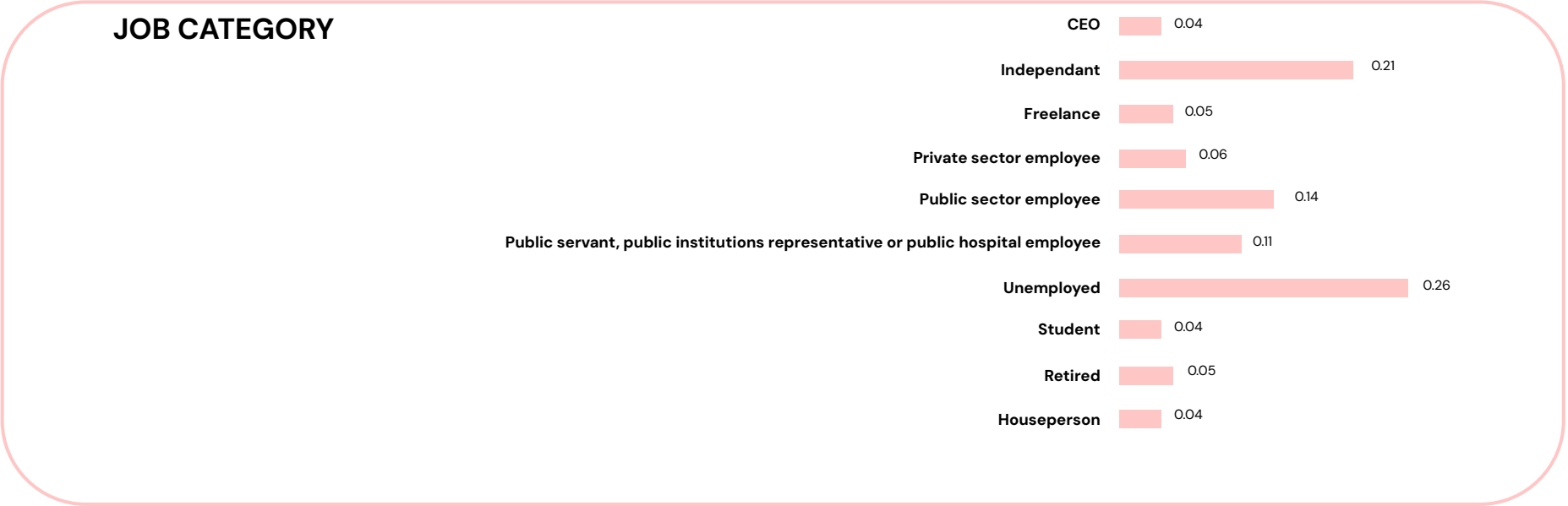
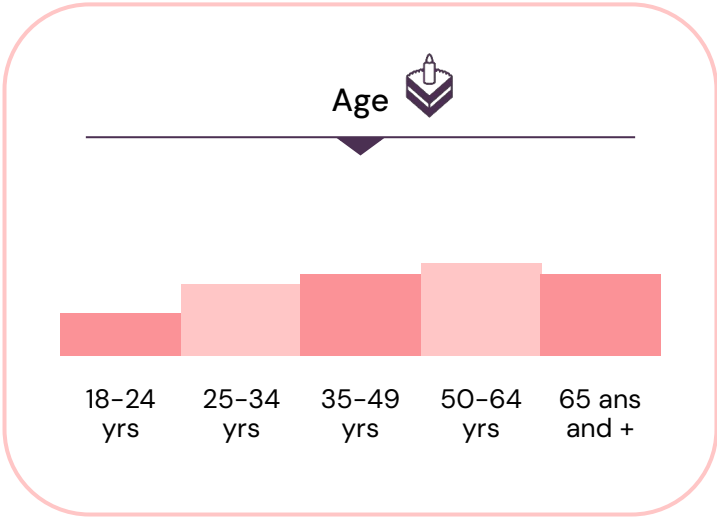
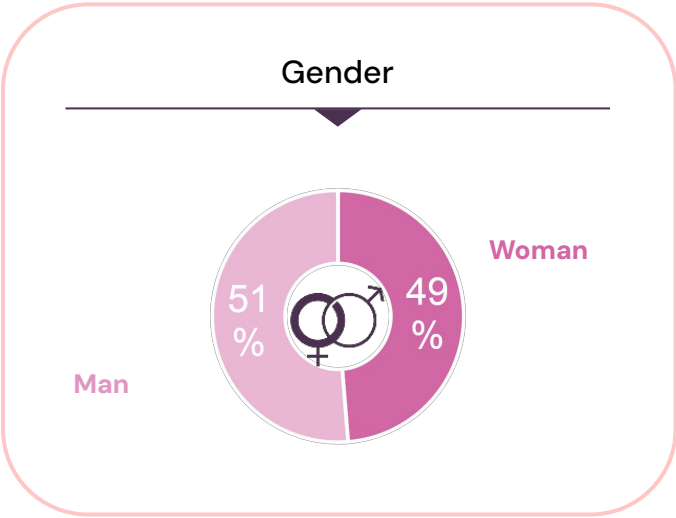
Sample profile



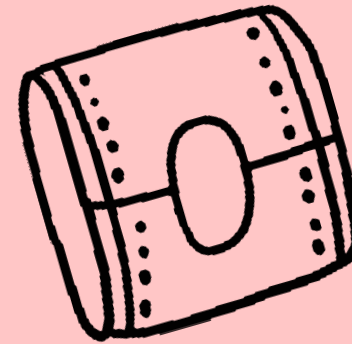
Sample profile

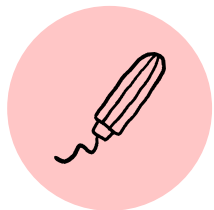
5 008 inhabitants of the 27 EU countries aged 18 and over.

Note: 49% of the women surveyed reported having had their period in the past 12 months.



Results



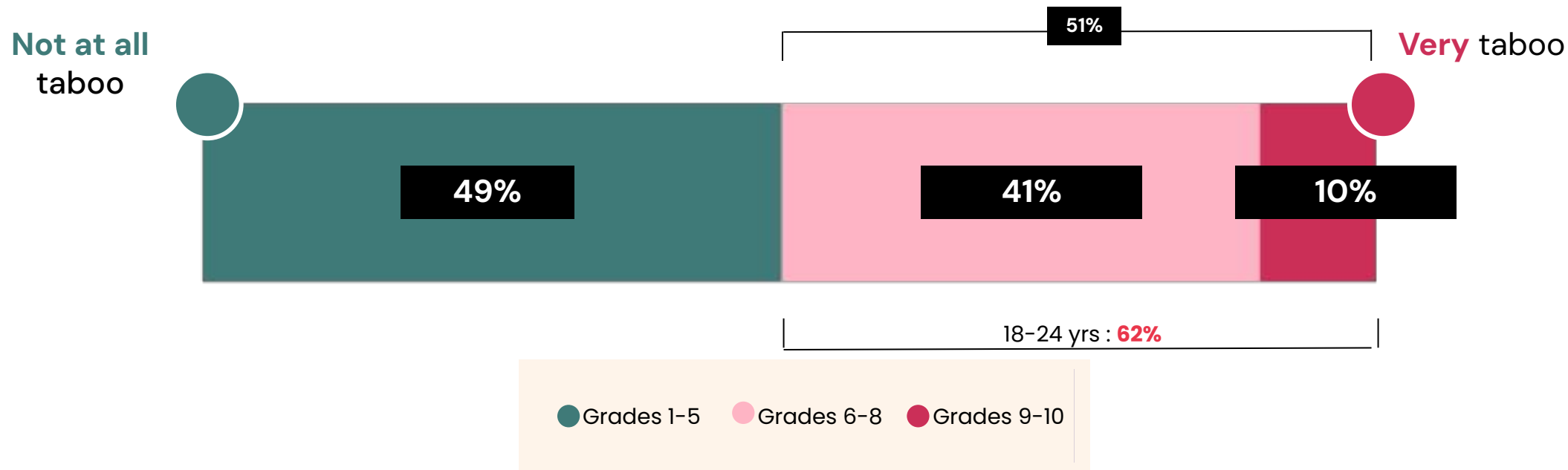


51% of Europeans consider menstruation to be a taboo or highly taboo topic.

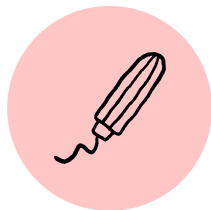
Q1. On a scale from 1 to 10, to what extent would you say that menstruation is a taboo subject in today's society?

Asked to all respondents (5,008)

In today's society, menstruation is perceived as a...



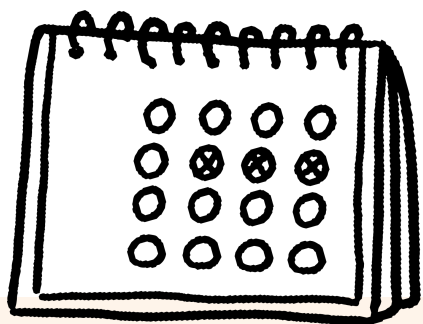
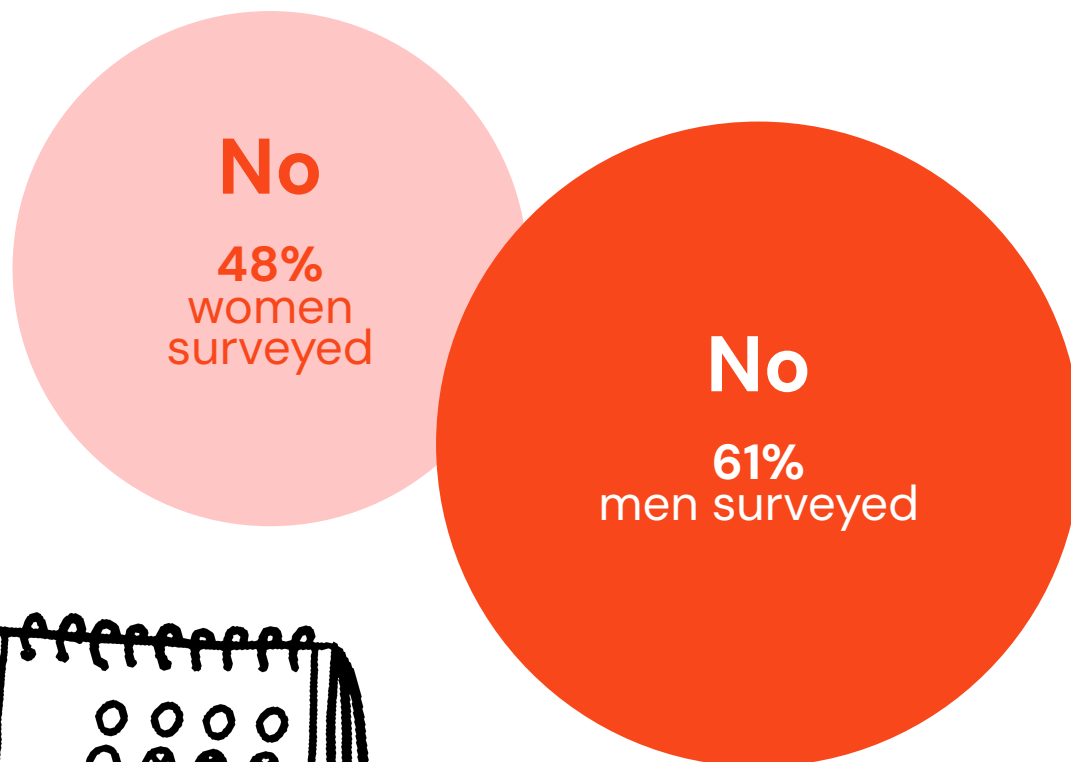
No significant differences between men and women



More than 1 in 2 people in Europe have never heard of period-related health conditions. Among women, 48% say they have never heard of such conditions.

Q2. Have you ever heard of potential health conditions related to menstruation?

Asked to all respondents (5,008)

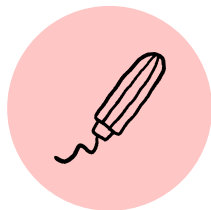


Overall

54% 

respondents have never heard of potential conditions related to menstruation

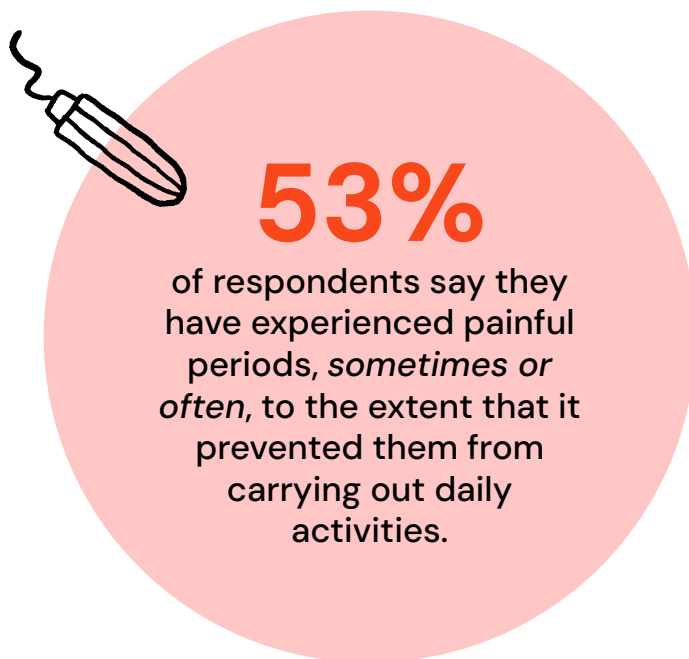
18-24 yrs : **45 %**



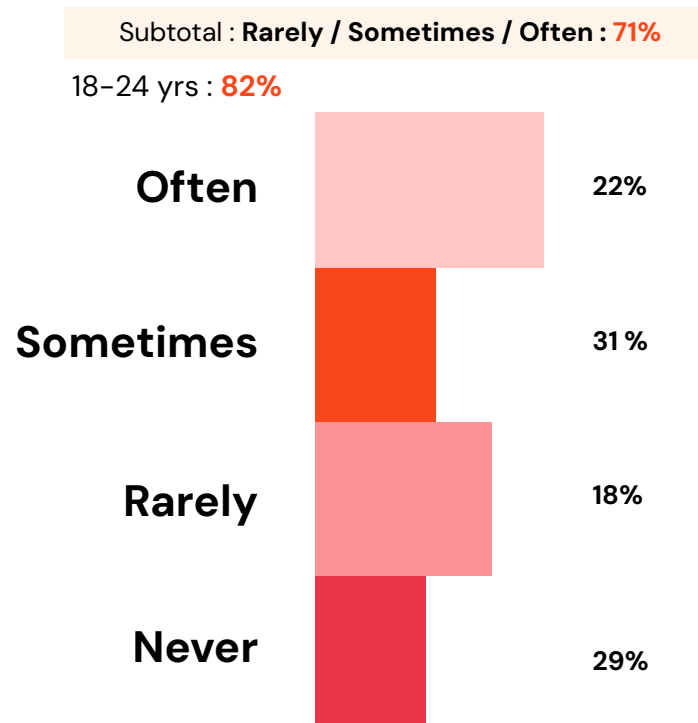
Menstrual pain has significantly impacted the lives of nearly 1 in 2 women, preventing them from carrying out daily activities.

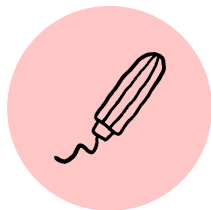
Q3. Have your periods ever been painful enough to stop you from carrying out your daily activities (going to work, attending school, eating, exercising, etc.)?

Asked to women who had their period in the last 12 months (1,438 respondents)



18-24 yrs : **62%**





Overall, 1 in 3 women report having had to forgo purchasing menstrual products in the past year.

Q5. In the past 12 months, have you ever had to forgo buying menstrual products for financial reasons, preventing you from using what you needed during your period?

Asked to women who had their period in the last 12 months (1,438 respondents)



34%

report having forgone the purchase of menstrual products due to financial reasons.

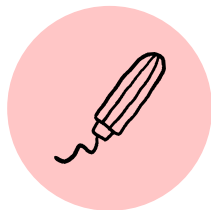
17% **once**

17% **several times**

No : 66%

18-24 yrs : **36%**

Photo [Christian Dubovan](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Among women who have not given up buying menstrual products, more than 1 in 10 report having had to forgo an essential everyday item in order to afford menstrual products.

In the past 12 months, have you ever had to forgo buying at least one essential everyday item (for example: food, hygiene products, fuel, etc.) in order to buy menstrual products instead?

To women who have had their period in the past 12 months and who did not forgo buying menstrual products for financial reasons (953 respondents):



13%

report having had to forgo buying an essential everyday item in order to purchase menstrual products instead

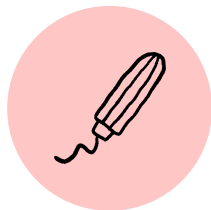
4% **only once**

9% **several times**

No: 87%

18-24 yrs old : **22%**

Photo de [Christian Dubovan](#) sur [Unsplash](#)



Overall, more than 4 out of 10 people have been affected by period poverty in the past 12 months.

Q5/6. In the past 12 months, have you ever had to forgo buying menstrual products you needed during your period for financial reasons? In the past 12 months, have you ever had to forgo buying at least one essential everyday item (for example: food, hygiene products, fuel, etc.) in order to buy menstrual products instead?

To women who have had their period in the past 12 months (1438 respondents)



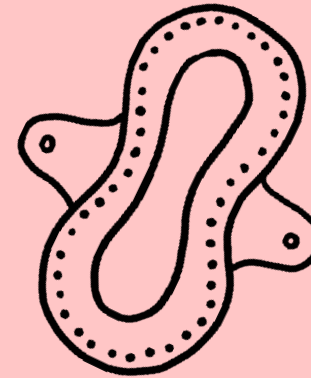
42%

report having had to forgo an essential everyday item in order to purchase menstrual products instead, or have had to forgo menstrual products for financial reasons.

18-24 yrs : 50%

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Summary

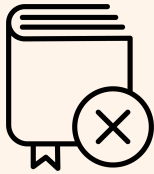


The summary



An important taboo

The topic of menstruation remains taboo for the majority of the European population.



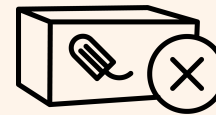
A lack of information

More than half of Europeans have never heard of potential diseases or conditions related to menstruation.



An impact on daily life

53% of respondents report having experienced painful periods, sometimes or often, that prevent them from carrying out their daily activities.



A very real period poverty.

4 out of 10 menstruating people are affected by period poverty in the past 12 months.

During this period, 34% of menstruating women would have forgone purchasing menstrual products for financial reasons. Among the others, 13% would have had to forgo buying an essential item (such as food, hygiene products, etc.) in order to afford them.