

“THEY SHOULD KEEP IT A SECRET”

Schoolboys about menstruation in Kitui County, Kenya

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Introduction

**Inappropriate
facilities**

**Myths,
taboos,
limited
knowledge**

**Girls
experience
physical and
mental
problems**

**School
absenteeism
Gender
inequality**

- **MHM neglected within WASH and research**



Problem statement

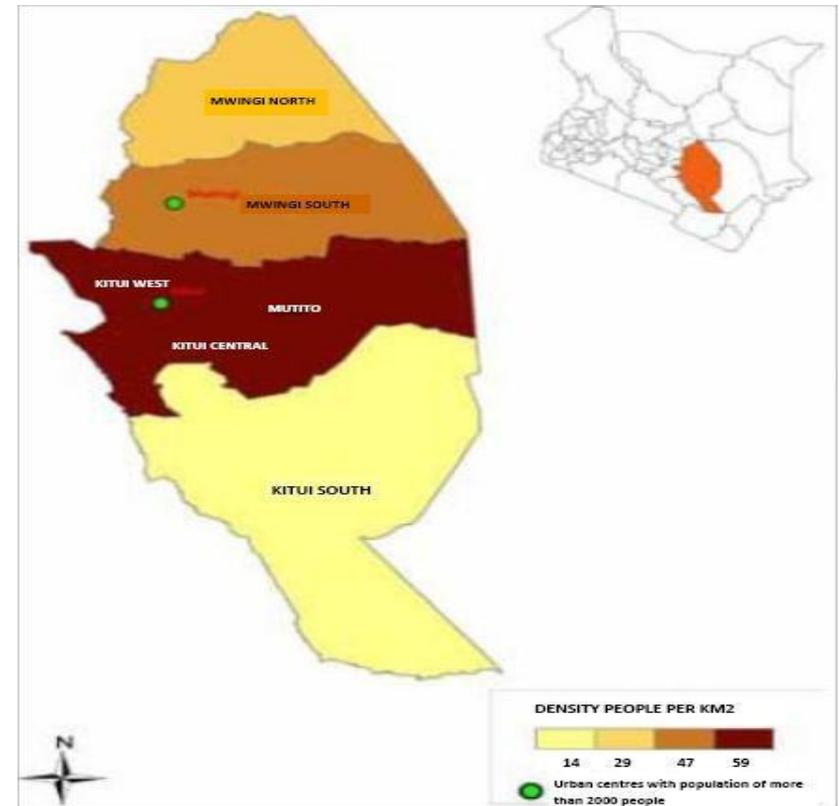
- Myths and taboos are social constructs
- Men influence girls' wellbeing?
- Knowledge gap about role of men

Research question

What are the **knowledge, attitudes and behavior** of schoolboys in Kitui County, Kenya, with regards to menstruation and MHM and how are they **influenced by their environment?**

Kitui

- Kitui County
 - Eastern Kenya
 - Semi arid, unreliable rainfall
 - Chronic water shortage
- Amref Health Africa
 - Challenges with MHM on primary schools





Methodology

- Explorative study

What?	Who?	Amount	Total participants
Focus group discussion	Boys aged 12-16 at primary schools	5	40

- Focus group discussions



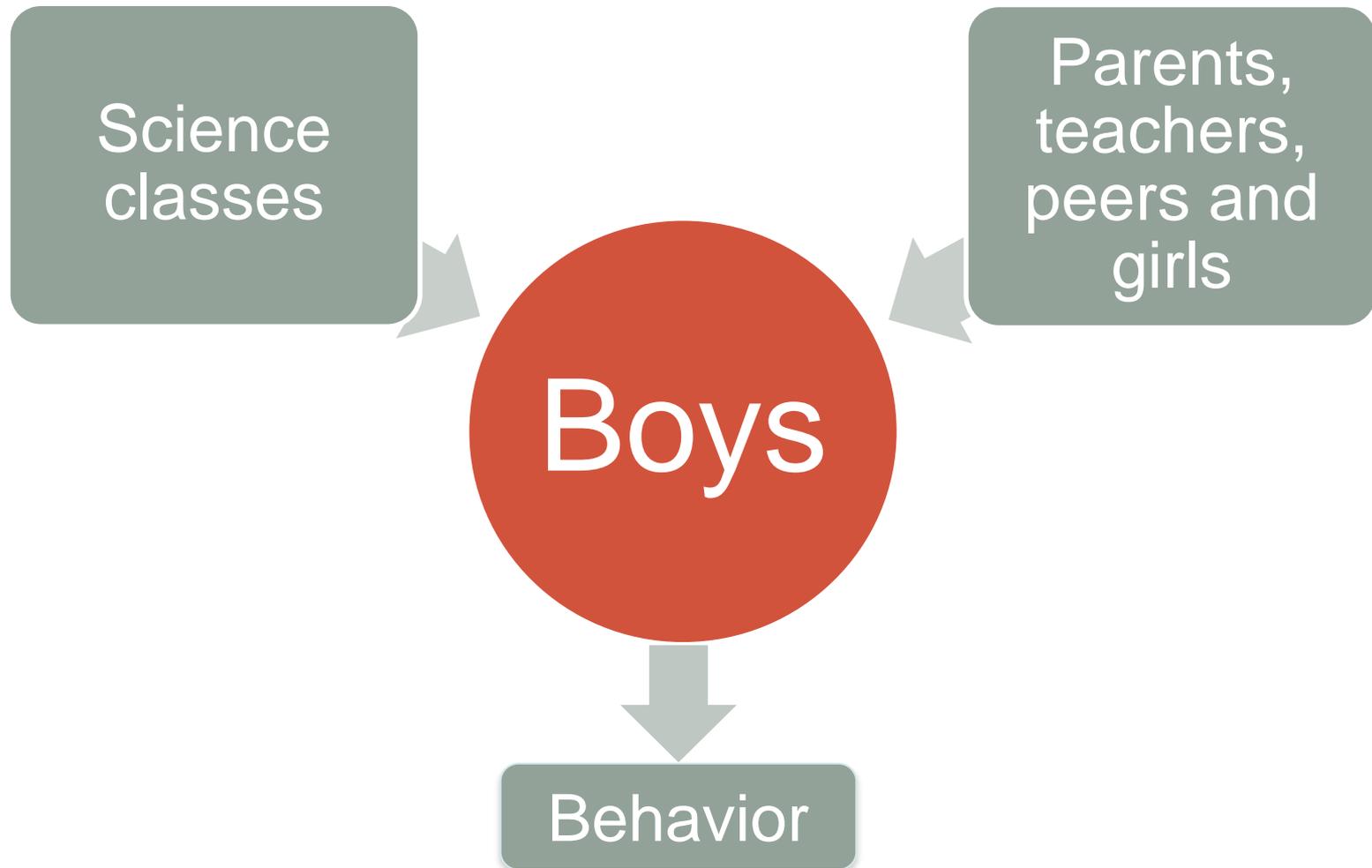
Results (1)

“The 20th of October 2013 was a memorable day for me, when my classmate girl got a period.

We were playing in the field. Then I stopped what I was doing and started concentrating to what I had seen. I called my boys friend and informed them. We started laughing at the girl until other girls knew what was going on. One of the girls ran to the office and informed the teacher. The teacher came to solve the problem. Then the teacher told us that this is not a laughing matter, it is normal to our girls.

After that the teacher gave counselling to the girl and gave her permission to go home. The minds of the boys where full of curiosity of unknown.”

Results (2): immediate environment



Results (3): knowledge

Science
classes

“When menstruation occurs to you, you should not be shy because it is normal”

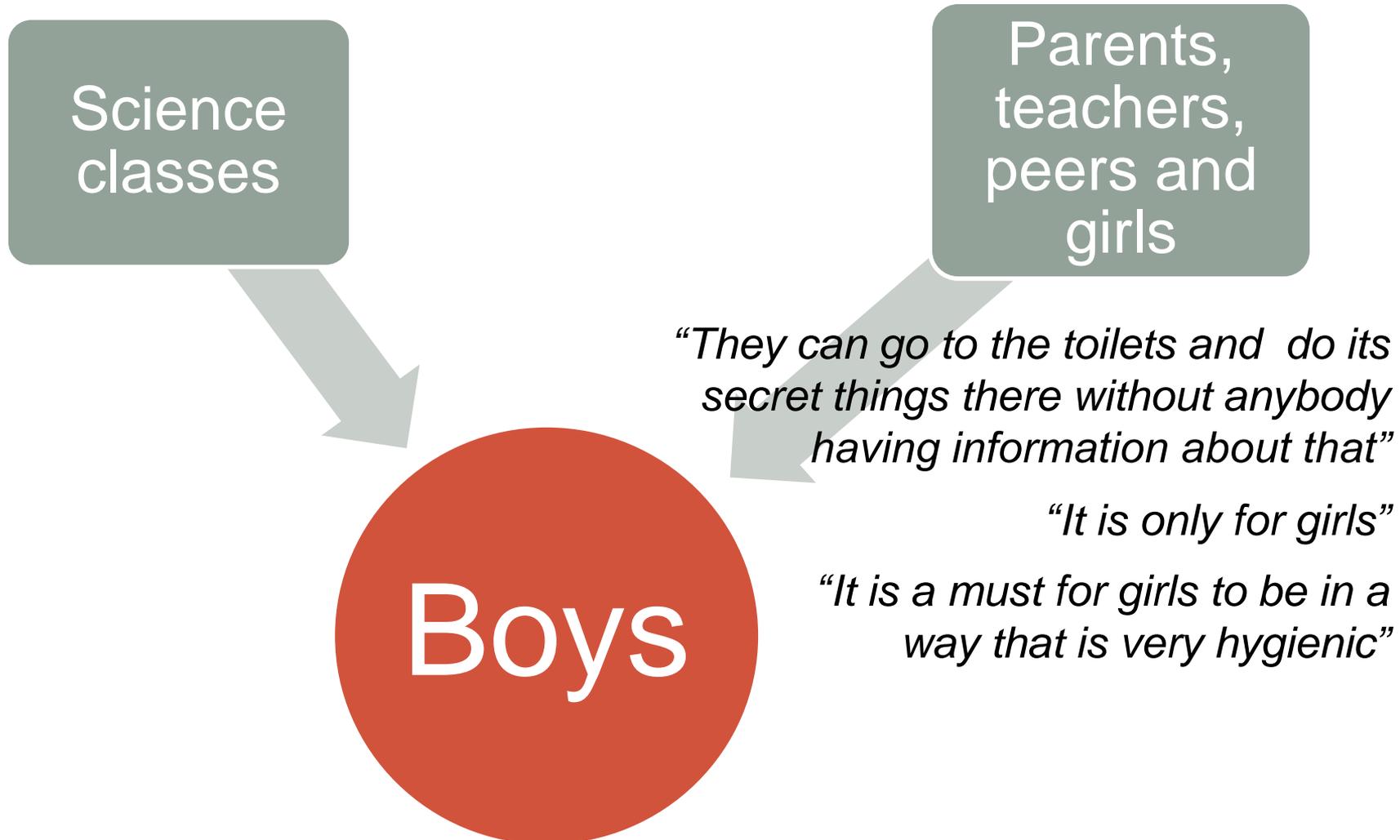
“It is the release of a fertilized egg”

Parents,
teachers,
peers and
girls

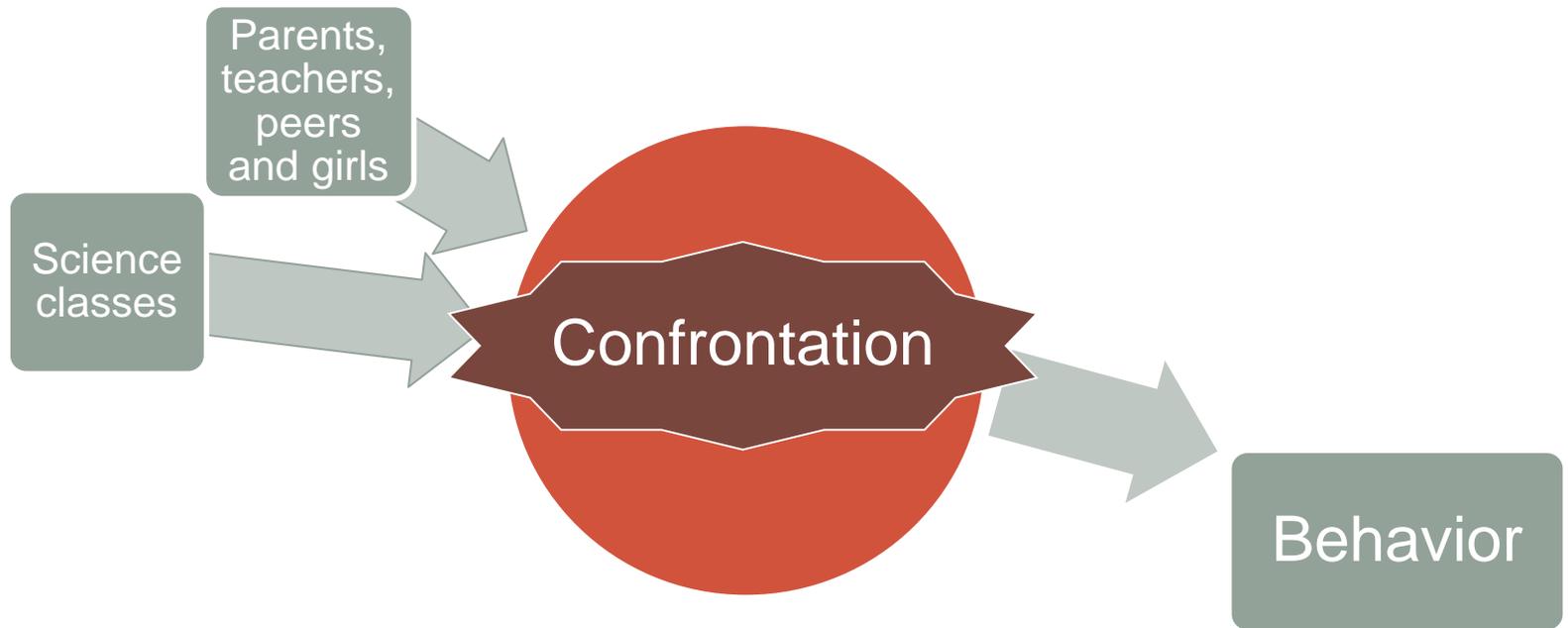
Boys

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graph TD; A[Science classes] --> B(Boys); C[Parents, teachers, peers and girls] --> B;
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Results (4): attitudes



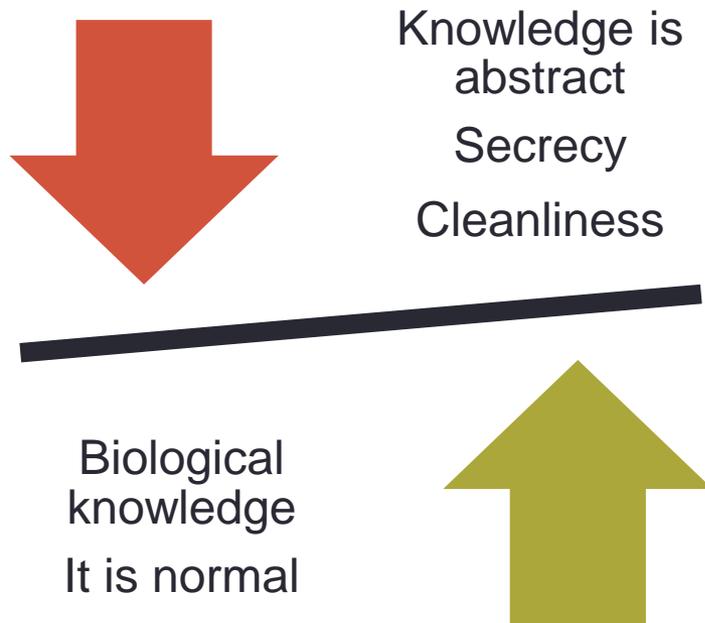
Results (5): confrontation



“She can just be walking or jumping and then you see a drop of blood coming”

“We smelled it many times”

Results (6): behavior



- Curiosity
“The minds of the boys were full of curiosity of unknown”
- Shy
- Laughing, teasing
“We say things, she doesn’t take a bath, she is not clean”, “kachafu”

Conclusion

What are the knowledge, attitudes and behavior of schoolboys in Kitui County, Kenya, with regards to menstruation and MHM and how are they influenced by their environment?

- **Knowledge** Difficult to put biological knowledge into practice
- **Attitudes** Secrecy, a girls' thing, but curious
- **Behavior** Shyness, laughing and teasing
- **Environment** Secrecy. Lack of appropriate facilities.

Recommendations

- Include boys in education
- Implement school program that involves participatory learning
- Relate education to daily life
- Further research

Questions?

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