Research Paper

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Assessment of Knowledge on Breast Cancer Among the Teachers in Selected Schools of Mangalore

Medical Science

KEYWORDS : knowledge, breast cancer, teachers

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ABSTRACT

Breast cancer is the leading cancer among women both in the developed and the developing world[1]. Early detection in order to improve breast cancer outcome and survival remains the cornerstone of breast cancer control. The aim of the study was to assess the knowledge on breast cancer among the teachers in selected schools in Mangalore. Descriptive research design was adopted. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the sample. A structured knowledge questionnaire was used to collect data from100 school teachers. The results of the study revealed that highest 40% had average knowledge, 36% had adequate knowledge and 24% had inadequate knowledge regarding breast cancer. And also shows that there was a significant association of knowledge score with age of school teachers $\chi 2^{(3)} = 8.386$ *at p <0.039.*

Introduction:

The health of families and communities are tied to the health of women, the illness or death of a woman has serious and far-reaching consequences for the health of her children, family and community. The slogan, "Healthy Women, Healthy World" embodies the fact that as custodians of family health, women play a critical role in maintaining the health and well being of their communities[1]

"Breast cancer is a major threat to the health of the women". It is one of the commonest malignancies afflicting women. Despite extensive investigation into the cause of breast cancer there is still no known cause and most likely involves many factors. Society for women's health research 2002 states that no health condition concerns women more than breast cancer. Breast cancer is a feared disease, as it can affect a women's sense of self, her sexuality and feminity[2].

The World Health Organization reported that in the 21st century breast cancer is the second leading cause of death in women and is the most common cancer among women and 1.2 million people are diagnosed with breast cancer each year worldwide and over 5,00,000 will die from this.[3] Studies indicate that as India becomes westernized, the incidence rate for breast cancer increases. In 2005, study conducted by the International Association of Cancer Research, based in Lyon, France, projected that there would be 250000 cases of breast cancer in India by 2015, a 3% increase per year. Breast cancer is increasing in India with such a pace that we may face a serious burden of this disease in coming years[4].

It is no more a death sentence, but an illness that can be managed like any other chronic illness like diabetes or hypertension, if diagnosed early. Early diagnosis and treatment is key to fight against breast cancer. Health education and health promotion programs can only be developed based on a specific understanding of women's health knowledge. So the investigators are interested to identify the knowledge of teachers about the prevention and early detection of breast cancer.

Review of the Literature

A descriptive study was conducted to determine breast self examination (BSE), knowledge and practice of middle-aged females. The study population comprised over 40 year old women (n=252) and nurses (n=29) working in a total of seven family health centers in Bolu, Turkey. Data were obtained through face to face interviews from September 2007 to January 2008. The study results revealed a highly significant relationship between increasing age in women and lack of BSE and improper practice of BSE steps ($p<0.05$), and between a higher degree of education and presence of breast cancer in the family and knowledge and practice of BSE ($p<0.05$). On the other hand, it was found that 93.1% of the nurses involved in the study practiced BSE. And concluded that educational programs aimed at increasing older women's knowledge level of BSE are required and nurses, as medical professionals meeting women in various environments, can play a key role in increasing women's awareness about breast health.[5]

A cross-sectional descriptive questionnaire study was conducted on 203 dental students at Panineeya Institute of Dental Sciences, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, India to assess the knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) regarding breast self-examination (BSE) in a cohort of Indian female dental students. Data were analyzed using SPSS software (version 12). Chi-square test was used for analysis of categorical variables. Correlation was analyzed using Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient. The total scores for KAP were categorized into good and poor scores based on 70% cut-off point out of the total expected score for each. *P*-value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant. The total mean knowledge score was 14.22 ± 8.04 with the fourth year students having the maximum mean score (19.98 ± 3.68). The mean attitude score was 26.45 ± 5.97. For the practice score, the overall mean score was 12.64 ± 5.92 with the highest mean score noted for third year 13.94 ± 5.31 students. KAP scores upon correlation revealed a significant correlation between knowledge and attitude scores only ($P<0.05$).[6]

Objectives:

- To assess the level of knowledge of teachers regarding breast cancer
- To find the association of level of knowledge with the selected demographic variables.

Methodology:

Setting : The study was conducted at selected schools of Mangalore

Population : School teachers those who are in service at Mangalore

Sample size : 100

Sampling technique: Purposive sampling technique

Research design: Descriptive design

Tools :

- Demographic proforma
- The structured knowledge questionnaire on breast cancer

The questionnaire had a total of 33 items. All the items were multiple-choice questions. A score value of one (1) was allotted to each correct response. Knowledge scores were arbitrarily divided as adequate (23-33), average (15-22) and inadequate (0-14).

Data collection method:

- Prior to data collection permission was obtained from the Block Educational Officer and teachers.
- Subjects were selected based on the set criteria
- The structured knowledge questionnaire on breast cancer was administered to school teachers .

Result of the study:

The demographic data showed that highest (60%) of the school teachers were in the age group of 25 -35 years and least (6%) were about > 55 years of age. Majority (86%) of them were married. Majority (76%) belonged to Hindu religion. Fifty eight percentage of the sample had > 6 years of experience. Majority (93%) of them had no family history of breast cancer. Highest (66%) of them received information regarding breast cancer, among them 63% of information received from mass media.

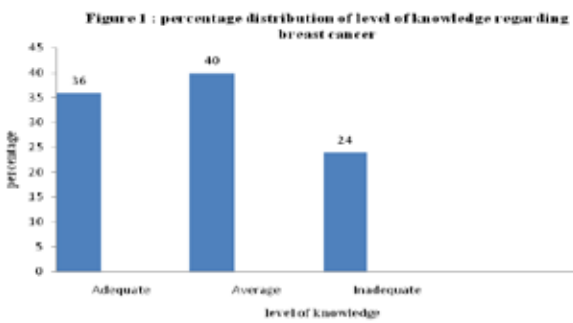

Figure 1 shows that highest (40%) had average knowledge, 36% had adequate knowledge and 24% had inadequate knowledge regarding breast cancer.

Table 1 : Association of knowledge score with selected demographic variables

N= 100

Demographic variables	χ2	df	P value	Inference
1.Age	8.386	3	0.039	Significant
2.Educational status	1.475	1	0.155	Not significant
3.Year of experience	1.198	2	0.549	Not significant
4.Marital status	0.059	1	0.517	Not significant
5.Religion	0.017	1	0.542	Not significant
6.Family history of breast cancer	1.803	1	0.172	Not significant
7. Source of information	6.114	5	0.295	Not significant

Data in **table 1** shows that there was a significant association of knowledge level with age of school teachers $\chi 2_{(3)} = 8.386$ at $p < 0.039$.

Conclusion:

Study shows highest (40%) have average knowledge regarding breast cancer. As the breast cancer is the commonest malignancy which affects women, women must have more information on early detection of breast cancer. Results of the study may enable the policy makers and decision makers to plan specific interventions for improving the knowledge of women on breast cancer.

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