



## Assess The Awareness of Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Cancer Among General Population

### KEYWORDS

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Cancer has become a common disease now a days. It is one of the most commonly occurring non-communicable disease and is the third cause of mortality in developing countries. The present study is "A Descriptive Study to Assess the Awareness of Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Cancer among General Population in Selected Hospital Ludhiana, Punjab." The objectives of the study were to assess the awareness regarding warning signs and risk factors of cancer in general population. To analyse the awareness of warning signs and risk factors of cancer association with the selected variables such as Age, Education, Income, Length of hospital stay, Source of information. To analyse the deficit areas among general population. To develop guidelines on warning signs and risk factors of cancer. **Methods:** The study was carried out in M.D. Oswal College of Nursing, Ludhiana, Punjab. The data was collected from 100 General population by Purposive Sampling with the help of structured interview schedule which consists of 20 knowledge items of Risk factors and 30 knowledge items of Warning Signs of specific Cancers including Oral Cancer, Lung Cancer, Skin Cancer, Gastrointestinal Cancer, Breast Cancer and Cervical Cancer. Time taken by each subject for completion of interview was 20-25 minutes. The data collection procedure was carried out from 20 January, 2012 to 4 February, 2012. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyse the data, bar & pie diagrams were used to depict the findings. The conceptual frame work used for the study was based on Rosentoch's & Becker's modified Health Belief Model. **Findings:** More general population was in the age category of 20-30 years i.e. younger age group with matriculation having Rs. 10,000- 15,000 Income & Unemployed, there stay in hospital was  $\geq 11$  days and there source of information was Health Care professionals. The knowledge score of 100 subjects ranged from 16% - 86% with a mean score of 27.97 with highest score in Warning signs of Breast Cancer (65.8%) and least in Cervical Cancer (51.66%). It was found that there was no statistically significant impact on the awareness of Warning Signs & Risk Factors of Cancer of general Population

### Introduction

Cancer has become a common disease now a days. It is one of the most commonly occurring non-communicable disease and is the third cause of mortality in developing countries (WHO 2007)<sup>1</sup>. There has been a tremendous increase in the incidence of cancer which is mainly attributed to urbanization, industrialization, lifestyle changes, population growth and increased life span. Cancer is an abnormal growth of cells which tend to proliferate in an uncontrolled way and in some cases it metastasize. Cancer can involve any tissue of the body. Early discovery of cancer is key to survival. Skin cancer is the most common type of malignancy for both men and women. The second most common type in men is prostate cancer and in women is breast cancer. Lung cancer is the leading cause of death from cancer for both men and women. Unfortunately, there are more than 200 different types of cancer and more than 60 organs in the body where it can develop (Samuels T, 2009)<sup>2</sup>.

**Jemal A. et al. (2011)**<sup>3</sup> In 2008, approximately 12.7 million cancers were diagnosed and 7.6 million people died of cancer worldwide. Cancers as a group account for approximately 13% of all deaths each year with the most common being: lung cancer 1.3 million, stomach cancer 803,000, colorectal cancer 639,000, liver cancer 610,000 and breast cancer 519,000 deaths. **Mulcahy N (2008)**<sup>4</sup> World Cancer Report from the International Agency for Research on Cancer suggest that cases of cancer doubled globally between 1975 and 2000, will double again by 2020, and will nearly triple by 2030. There were an estimated 12 million new cancer diagnoses and more than 7 million deaths worldwide this year and expected increase in incidence is about 1% each year with larger increases in China, Russia and India<sup>1</sup>.

### Review of Literature

**Puri S. et al. (2010)**<sup>5</sup> conducted a study to determine the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding common cancers in urban and slum dwellers of Chandigarh and found that about 3/4th of respondents could correctly name the common cancers but the knowledge about preventive modes of cancer was lacking as only 2.5% (23) of Urban population and none among slum population were Knowing about Pap smear. None of the respondent could enumerate all the warning symptoms of cancer. 3/4th (307, 22.7%) of respondents knew about the tobacco as a risk factor for cancer followed by alcohol.

**Maree JE and Wright SC (2010)**<sup>6</sup> conducted a study to explore that women living in South Africa had a low level of knowledge and understanding of cancer. Cancer was seen as something that primarily happens to the breast. There was no link between the perception of cancer and the seriousness of the warning signs.

**Keeney S et al. (2010)**<sup>7</sup> undertaken a study to explore the public knowledge of warning signs for cancer which show that respondents could identify 4.8 cancer warning signs correctly. Analysis by demographics shows that being female, being older, having a higher level of educational attainment and being in a higher socio-economic group are predictors of better level of knowledge of cancer warning signs.

### Methodology

A descriptive approach and a non-experimental research design was utilized for collection and analysis. The study was conducted at M.D. Oswal Multispeciality & Cancer Hospital, Ludhiana, Punjab. It is a 300 bedded hospital

with daily OPD of average 300-400 patients. Relatives, visitors or attendants of the patients who were hospitalized, comprised the population of the study. A convenient sample of 50 male and 50 female subjects were drawn from the categories of population defined for the study. **The structured interview schedule was prepared which consisted of 2 parts: PART-I: Demographic Data, PART-II: Awareness assessment Questionnaire for Risk factors and Warning signs of Cancer.** Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to analyse the data.

## Results

### SECTION I: Demographic Data

Table – 1

Percentage Distribution of General Population By Sample Characteristics

N=100			
Sr. no.	Characteristics	N	%
1	Gender	50	50
	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
2	Age	35	35
	20-30	20	20
	31-40	21	21
	41-50	24	24
	≥50	24	24
3	Level of Education	15	15
	Illiterate	34	34
	Matriculate	22	22
	10+2	29	29
4	Income	14	14
	≤5,000	24	24
	5,001-10,000	32	32
	10,001-15,000	30	30
	≥15,001	30	30
5	Occupation	48	48
	Employed	52	52
	Unemployed	52	52
6	Length of Hospital Stay	33	33
	≤5 days	21	21
	6-10 days	46	46
	≥11 days	46	46
7	Source of Information	27	27
	Television	16	16
	Related Literature	57	57
	Health Care Professionals	57	57

In conclusion more general population was in Age category of 20 – 30 years i.e. were younger age group with matriculation having Rs.10,000 – 15, 000 Income (monthly) and unemployed, there stay was ≥ 11 days and there source of information was Health care professionals.

Fig. 1 Percentage Distribution of General Population According to Level of Knowledge

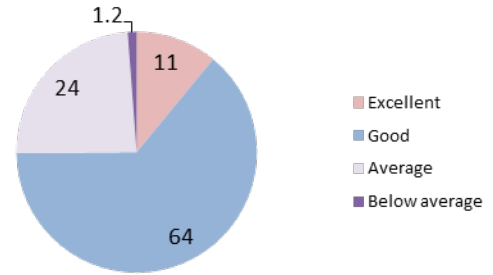


Fig. 1 depicts that 11 subjects (11%) had Excellent level of knowledge, 64 subjects (64%) had Good Level of knowledge, 24 subjects (24%) had Average level of knowledge and only 1 subject (1%) had below average knowledge.

Fig. 2 Mean knowledge Scores of General Population

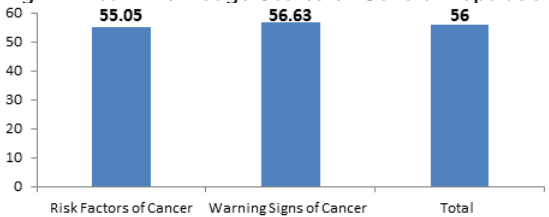


Fig. 2 depicts that General Population had good knowledge regarding Risk Factors and Warning Signs of Cancer.

Fig. 3- Mean knowledge Scores of General Population in Specific Cancer Areas

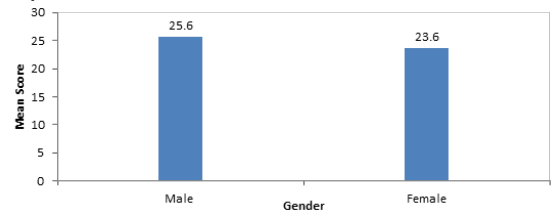


Fig. 3 indicate that general population had highest knowledge in the area of Breast Cancer, followed by Oral Cancer, Risk Factors of Cancer, Gastrointestinal Cancer, Lung Cancer, Skin Cancer with least knowledge score in the area of Cervical Cancer.

Fig. 4 Mean Knowledge Scores of General Population in All Cancer Areas according to Gender

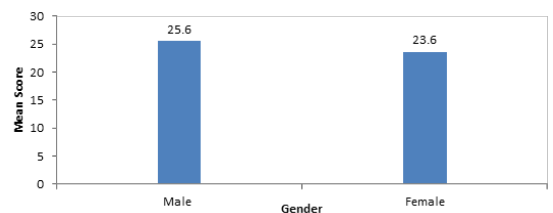


Fig. 4 shows that Males have higher mean knowledge score (29.22%) as compared to Females (26.94%). Based on t- test the calculated value was 1.66 at 99 degree of freedom and was statistically non significant. So gender difference does not have any significant influence on the cancer awareness.

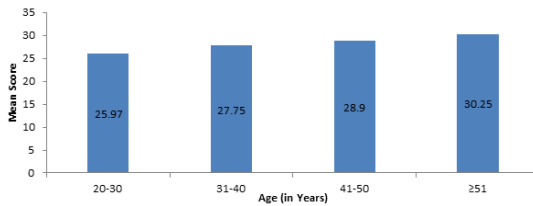
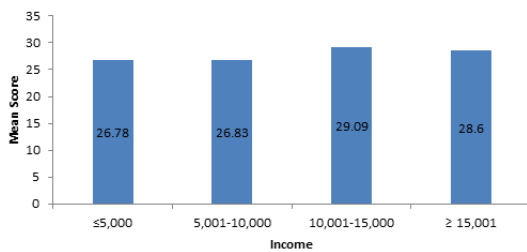
**Fig. 5 Mean Knowledge Scores of General Population according to Age**

Fig 5 depicts that Calculated mean score value shows difference between knowledge of different age groups with highest mean knowledge score in  $\geq 50$  age group. It can be concluded that age do have some influence on the knowledge of general population. But it was found statistically non significant.

**Fig 6 - Mean knowledge Scores of General Population in All Cancer Areas according to Income**

Data presented in Fig 6 reveals that Mean knowledge score of general population according to Income category is similar, with highest mean knowledge score in income category of 10,001-15,000. Hence, it can be inferred that Income had not any significant influence on the cancer awareness.

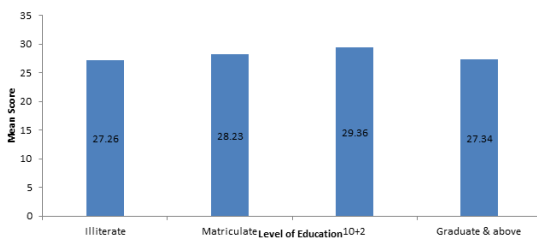
**Fig. 7 Mean knowledge Score of General Population in Cancer Areas according to Level of Education**

Fig 7 depicts that highest mean knowledge score is in the category of 10+2. Based on ANOVA test the calculated value was found to be statistically not significant.

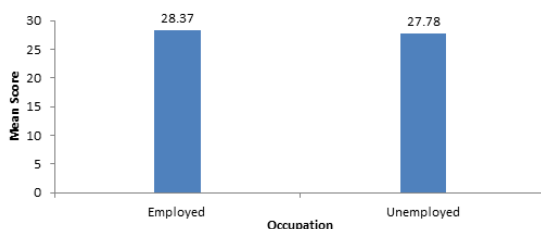
**Fig. 8 Mean knowledge Scores of General Population in different areas of Cancer according to Occupation**

Fig 8 - The employed population had highest mean knowledge score as compared to the unemployed population. Based on 't' test the calculated value was statistically

non significant.

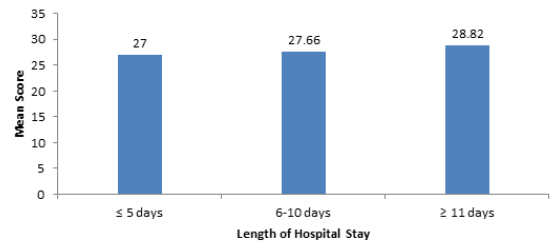
**Fig. 9 Mean knowledge Scores of General Population in different areas of Cancer according to Length of Hospital Stay**

Fig. 9 depicts that General population with hospital stay of  $\geq 11$  days had highest mean knowledge score.

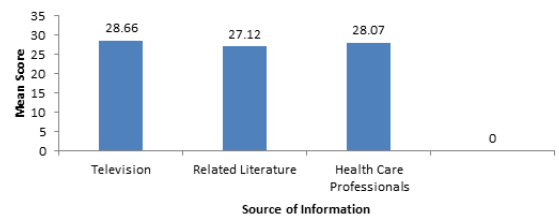
**Fig. 10 Mean knowledge Scores of General Population in different areas of Cancer according to Source of Information**

Fig 10 Data reveals that general population whose source of information was Television and Health care professionals had more knowledge as compared to the general population who got the information from related literature.

### Conclusion

Present study revealed that maximum number of General Population had Good Knowledge score and the least General population had Below Average Knowledge Score regarding Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Cancer.

According to areas of knowledge of general population regarding Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Cancer it can be concluded that general population had highest knowledge in the area of Breast Cancer, followed by Oral Cancer, Risk Factors of Cancer, Gastrointestinal Cancer, Lung Cancer, Skin Cancer with least knowledge score in the area of Cervical Cancer.

Gender, Age, Level of education, Income, Occupation, Length of Hospital Stay and Source of Information had no or very slight influence on the Awareness of General Population regarding warning Signs and risk factors of Cancer.

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