



## STUDY TO ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL REGARDING PREVENTION OF BREAST CANCER AMONG NUNS

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**ABSTRACT** **Introduction:** Breast cancer has been emerging as a top cancer killer across the world not only among females but also in males as well. Breast cancer is a threat to women because it affects the perception of sexuality and body image to a degree greater than any other cancer. The present study aimed to assess the level of knowledge and skill regarding prevention of breast cancer among the nuns. This is possible only by adherence to BSE regimen by every woman. BSE is a significant step in the continuous struggle against breast cancer. BSE is mandatory as it helps women to have 'breast familiarity'. Such familiarity is indeed very essential for the early detection of untoward pathological changes of breast cancer.

**Methods:** A quantitative approach with descriptive design was used. Sixty samples were collected as per inclusion criteria

**Results:** Samples had average knowledge on prevention of breast cancer and majority of samples have poor knowledge on performance of breast self examination.

**Conclusion:** study concluded that nuns were having average knowledge level on prevention of breast cancer.

**KEYWORDS :** knowledge; skill; nuns.

### Introduction

Cancer is a group of more than 200 diseases characterized by uncontrolled and unregulated growth of cells. It is a major health problem that occurs in people of all ethnicities. Breast cancer is probably the most feared among women, due to its high incidence, and above all, to the psychological effects that affect their perception of sexuality and their self image. An early diagnosis is the best guarantee of success in the treatment of breast cancer and the woman gives a relevant contribution in the early detection when she systematically does the self-examination. When breast cancer is detected in its early stages, the result is better prognosis, more successful treatment, and prolonged survival.

The aim of this study was to assess the level of knowledge and skill regarding prevention of breast cancer among the nuns.

### Statement of the problem

A Descriptive study to assess the knowledge and skill regarding prevention of breast cancer among nuns residing at selected convents of Mangalore

### Objectives of the study were to:

- assess the pre-test knowledge scores of nuns on prevention of breast cancer
- assess the skill of nuns in performing breast self-examination

### Assumptions:

The study assumes that:

- The nuns are having some knowledge about breast cancer and breast self examination
- The nuns being nulliparous are at risk for breast cancer.
- Knowledge and skill helps in practicing breast self-examination.

### Operational definitions

**Knowledge:** In this study, knowledge refers to the subject's correct response to questions on breast cancer and breast self-examination as measured by structured knowledge questionnaire and is expressed in terms of knowledge scores which is categorized as good, average and poor.

**Skill:** In this study, skill refers to the accuracy in performance of breast self-examination by nuns as measured by an observational checklist on breast examination.

**Nuns:** In this study, the nuns refer to the religious women of Christian community who are residing in convents.

### Methodology

A quantitative descriptive approach was adopted for the study. The study population consists of nuns of Mangalore city and the sample consists of nuns residing in selected convents in Mangalore. Sixty nuns were selected by non-probability convenient sampling technique. Data

was collected by using demographic proforma, structured knowledge questionnaire and observational checklist. Knowledge scores were categorized as excellent (21-25), good (16-20), average (11-15) and poor (0-10). Skill scores were rated as good (7-10), average (5-6) and poor (0-4).

Content validity was obtained from experts in the field of nursing. The pre-testing and reliability of the tool were carried out among 20 nuns in Nazareth Convent, Mangalore. Split- half method was used to measure the co-efficient of internal consistency. The reliability co-efficient of the tool was determined using Spearman- Brown prophecy formula. The reliability co-efficient,  $r = 0.81$  rendered the tool highly effective and reliable. The reliability of the checklist for skill assessment was done by using the inter-rater inter-observer method and the reliability was  $r = 0.95$ .

The investigator obtained permission from the Mother Superior prior to the data collection period. Data was collected from Holy Rosary convent, Sacred Heart Convent and St. Jerosa Convent and the data collection period extended for one month. The investigator met the respondents individually in the convents. The purpose of the study was explained and informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality was assured to all the samples. The time taken for the pre-test was 30-35 minutes per respondent and that of the observational checklist was 5-10 minutes.

### Plan for data analysis

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the study findings are organized under following sections

### SECTION 1

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of samples according to the sample characteristics**

Demographic characteristics	f	%
<b>n=60</b>		
1. Age (in years)		
a. 20-30	43	71.66
b. 31-40	14	23.33
c. 41-50	01	1.66
d. 51-60	02	3.33
2. Educational qualification		
a. High school	35	58.33
b. PUC	08	13.33
c. Diploma OR Graduate	10	16.66
d. Post Graduate and above	07	11.66
3. Occupation		
a. Student	46	76.66
b. Teacher	10	16.66
c. Any others (specify) ---	04	6.66
4. Family history of breast cancer		
a. Yes	01	1.66
b. No	59	98.33

5. Are you aware of any of your relatives, friends or colleagues affected by breast cancer?		
a. Yes	10	16.66
b. No	50	83.33
6. Source of health information		
a. Books	16	26.66
b. Periodicals	10	16.66
c. Media	15	25.00
d. Health personnel	19	31.66

The table 1 shows that most of the samples (71.6%) were less than 30 years of age and 58.3% of them had high school education

## SECTION 2

**Table 2: Evaluation and comparison of pre-test knowledge scores**

n=60

Level	F	%
Poor 0-10	16	26.66
Average 11-15	39	65.00
Good 16-20	05	08.33
Excellent 21—25	0	0

The table 2 shows that majority of the samples had average knowledge. Moreover, 26.6% of samples had poor knowledge on breast cancer.

## SECTION 3

**Table 3: Evaluation and comparison of pre-test skill scores**

n=60

Level	F	%
Poor 0-4	49	81.66
Average 5-6	11	18.33
Good 7-10	0	0

The table 3 shows that 81.6% of samples have poor knowledge on performance of breast self examination.

## Summary

To summarize the nuns were having average level of knowledge regarding prevention of breast cancer and this finding is supported by the following explorative study conducted in the Midwestern United States on health practices of 345 American Catholic nuns. The findings of the study revealed that 44% had not had a recent breast or pelvic examination, 26% never ever performed breast self-examination (BSE), and those performing breast self-examination were more likely to have been examined by a healthcare provider in the past year ( $p < 0.05$ ).

## Conclusion

The study concluded that

- Nuns are having average knowledge regarding prevention of breast cancer
- Nuns are having poor skill in performance of breast self examination
- Nuns comprise a chronologically older cohort than their secular counterparts, efforts that enable adoption of wellness practices and facilitate improved healthcare among these women seem to be warranted. Hence more educative sessions can be done to prevent the incidence of breast cancer among nuns

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