

# World Congress on Breast Cancer

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## Knowledge of preventive measures towards breast cancer among nuns in Anambra State, Nigeria

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**Background:** Breast cancer has been popularly defined as a malignant tumor of the brain cells. This paper assessed the knowledge of preventive measures towards breast cancer among the contemplative and active nuns in Anambra State, Nigeria. Five research questions were raised to guide the study.

**Methods:** Cross-sectional descriptive survey was the design adopted. Power Analysis was used to draw a sample of 324 nuns from an estimated population of 794 nuns living in communities located in Anambra State, Nigeria, through stratified, proportionate, and convenient sampling techniques. Data were collected through personal contact and administration of a seventeen-item researchers-developed questionnaire on knowledge of preventive measures towards breast cancer to the nuns with the assistance of three trained preceptors. Data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages. Unpaired t-test was used to compare the responses of the two groups.

**Results:** Many responds, 237 (73.1%) were aged 20 – 49 years, 157 of them were graduates while 167 were non-graduates. Only 91 (28.1%) had health-related jobs. Majority, 172 (53.1%) lived in rural areas. Most common preventive measure known to the respondents was genetic counseling especially in women, 136 (42.0%), with family history of breast cancer. Only 6.2% (20) indicated that breastfeeding for a period more than a year would prevent breast cancer. There was significant difference ( $P<0.05$ ) in the knowledge of breast cancer preventive measures among the respondents there group.

**Conclusion:** The study revealed that the nuns in Anambra State, Nigeria have poor knowledge of preventive measures of breast cancer. Many below the age of 50 that participated in the study with their high academic exposure did not seem to have any knowledge of preventive measures much. It appeared that more respondents in the active group know the preventive measures more than the contemplatives. This could be attributed to the fact that they had more graduates than their counterparts, coupled with the fact that majority of the contemplatives live in rural areas.

**Recommendation:** There is need for each religious congregation to establish policy guidelines aimed at promoting adequate and urgent dissemination of all breast cancer related information. Breast cancer preventive measures and primary screening procedures should form part of the curriculum used for their new members. Similar studies should be conducted using a larger sample which should include all age brackets.

### Biography

Madu Laurette Philomena Nkem, a State Registered Nurse and Midwife, majored in the following specialty areas: Nursing Education (1st degree); Registered Nurse Educator, MSc Nursing; MEd & PhD (Educational Administration & Supervision); as well as a certified MBTI Practitioner. She headed the renowned School of Nursing Ihiala for 15 years after many years of Clinical Nursing, some years of classroom teaching. She served in Lady of Lourdes Governing Board for 15 years, and made outstanding contributions. She is highly interested in research work.

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