

Community pharmacists involvement in breast cancer health promotion in United Arab Emirates

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Breast cancer is considered the most common type of cancer among females in United Arab Emirates (UAE). Although the continuous effort to increase the awareness about breast cancer and the importance of early screening, the screening rate of breast cancer is extremely low in UAE. It is expected the involvement of community pharmacists in breast cancer health promotion activity will have a great positive impact.

Objective: To determine the current involvement of community pharmacists in breast cancer health promotion and to assess the perceived barriers that may hinder community pharmacists from performing breast cancer health promotion activities in their daily practice.

Method: A cross sectional survey of 220 community pharmacists was collected over the period of 6 months. The surveys asked about the current involvement of the pharmacists in breast cancer health promotion activities, the pharmacists' interest to have continuous education programs about breast cancer, The willingness of pharmacists to provide breast cancer health promotion activities to their female patients, and the perceived barriers for performing such role.

Results: Over a period of 6 months, 220 surveys were collected. Ninety three percent of respondents indicated that they have never performed any kind of breast cancer health promotion activities. On the other hand, 73% of the respondents were highly interested in performing such activity. Also, 69% were very willing to have continuous education programs related to breast cancer health promotion. In addition, 89% believed that their involvement in breast cancer health promotion activities will be beneficial for their patients. The most common barriers for performing breast cancer health promotion by the pharmacists were lack of educational materials (83%), Lack of public recognition (72%), difficulty in discussing the breast cancer issue with female patients in UAE (89%).

Conclusion: Involvement of pharmacists in breast cancer health promotion activity in UAE is considered very low but the majority of pharmacists are very interested to perform such activities. Further efforts should be done to engage the community pharmacists in breast cancer health promotion through providing them with specialized continuous education programs and overcoming the perceived previously mentioned barriers.

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