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Assessment of the level of knowledge about breast cancer related symptoms and treatment

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Objectives: Breast cancer is the most common cancer in females according to the National Campaign for breast cancer awareness. The only way to prevent the progression of breast cancer is the early detection of it, so we conducted a study to assess the knowledge about breast cancer, breast self-examination and breast cancer's treatments and their side effects among females who live in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Methods: It is a cross-sectional study targeted Saudi females who live in Riyadh with an average age between (18-60) years old in order to assess their knowledge about breast cancer, breast self-examination and breast cancer's treatments and their side effects by distribution of self-administered questionnaire.

Results: A total of 500 participants, 395(82.2%) were between age (18-40) years old. 278 (57.9%) had a university degree and 205 (42.7%) of participants had monthly income from 5000-10000 SR. 86 (17.9%) had a family history of breast cancer while only 27 (5.6%) had been diagnosed with breast cancer. Regarding the knowledge about breast cancer symptoms, 407 (84.8%) of our participants recognize that breast lump is one of the breast cancer symptoms. When it comes to the knowledge about breast self examination (BSE), 275 (57.3%) mentioned that they knew how to perform BSE, while 200 (41.7%) performed it monthly. The knowledge of breast cancer symptoms and BSE was significantly associated with level of education and the monthly income of the participants while the practice of BSE was only related with level of education. Regarding the knowledge about side effects of different methods used in breast cancer treatment between group who had been diagnosed with breast cancer or had family history of it and another group who hadn't, both groups agreed that change in the body image is the most undesirable side effect of mastectomy by (62.7% and 55.6%) respectively. While in chemotherapy, hair loss was the most undesirable side effect in both groups (52.9% and 47.9%). Moreover (42.2% and 36.8%) believed that skin ulcers were the most unwanted side effect of radiation therapy. It was also observed that (63.7% and 69.3%) of respondents from both groups respectively agreed that cervical cancer was the most undesirable side effect of hormonal therapy.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates a high level of knowledge about breast cancer symptoms and BSE among Saudi women comparing to previous studies. On the other hand, there is a need to encourage women to practice BSE and increase the knowledge about the benefit of early detection of breast cancer.

Biography

Salma Abdullah Jabarty and Raghad Almusfir both are, a fifth year medical student at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Their research experience includes various programs, contributions and participation in different countries for diverse fields of study. Their research interests as a reflects in their wide range of publications in various national and international journals.

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