ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVES: To evaluate the screening practices of nurses in relation to breast cancer and its risk factors.

STUDY DESIGN: A cross sectional Observational study.

PLACE AND DURATION: The study was conducted in the two public hospitals i.e. The Children's Hospital & the Institute of Child Health Multan and Nishtar Hospital and Medical College Multan from 1st June 2015 to 30th November 2015.

METHODOLOGY: A sample of 200 female nurses was selected through convenient sampling technique. The charge nurses working on regular basis in the public sector hospitals were included and other nursing college trainees were excluded in the study. Questionnaire was used as a tool that include; frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. Questions regarding breast screening practices, awareness, breast self examination were asked.

RESULTS: Of the 200 respondents 70.0% of the respondents had ever heard of breast self-examination while 30.0% reported that they had not ever heard about breast self-examination. Majority of the respondents 71.5% reported that they had not ever practiced breast self-examination and only 28.5% reported that they had practiced breast self-examination. About 96.0% respondents reported that they had not got their breasts ever examined by a doctor or a nurse and only 4.0% said they got examined their breasts by a doctor or a nurse.

CONCLUSION: The knowledge of breast screening practices among female nurses was relatively poor and it needed to be improved.

KEY WORD: Breast Cancer; Screening; Female Nurses; Public Hospitals

INTRODUCTION

The one of the most common form of cancer is breast cancer that strikes women in increasing the rate of morbidity and mortality among women. It is recognized as a major public health problem in both developed and developing countries due to the high prevalence rate, burden on health system, and direct medical expenses. In recent years, breast cancer incidence rates have stabilized or increased slightly in developed countries, however mortality rate of breast cancer is decreasing. While in Middle East Countries like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, UAE etc, the incidence and mortality rate of breast cancer are increasing. Cancer causes six million deaths in every year and 12% of deaths worldwide. Detection of cancer at early phase greatly increases the chances of effective treatment and decreases the morbidity, mortality and burden of health. Therefore, World Health Organization recommends regular screening of women breast using mammography. The breast cancer mortality can be reduced to one-third with the help of mammography through early detection and treatment. Breast self-examination (BSE) and clinical breast examination (CBE) are other detection methods often fortified. To make the screening program more effective, before developing the strategies, it is very important to assess the awareness of screening target group. A number of research studies have been conducted in Western environments to examine the screening tools to detect and understand the obstacles and reasons for underutilization. Poverty, cultural issues, aging, lack of facilities, fear of detection or perceptions of the disease and privacy concerns. In Pakistan, females who are suffering from breast cancer are detected when their cancer has progressed to advanced stage. In Pakistan it is observed that more than half of the breast cancer patients present at the advanced stage (Stage III and IV). Regular breast examination and mammography of women according to the International guidelines can overcome disease...
respondents 184(92.0%) said that they did not ever have any
type of breast disease but 16(8.0%) said that they had breast
disease in the past. Of the 200 respondents 194(97.0%) claimed
that they had no mother, sister or daughter diagnosed with
breast cancer while only 6(3.0%) said that they had a mother, a
sister or a daughter diagnosed with breast cancer. Majority of
the respondents 118(59.0%) had family physician while
82(41.0%) had no family physician. (Table - II).

Of the 200 respondents majority of the respondents
140(70.0%) indicated that they had ever heard of breast self-
examination while 60(30.0%) showed that they had not ever
heard of breast self-examination. Majority of the respondents
143(71.5%) designated that they had not ever practiced breast
self-examination and only 57(28.5%) said that they had
practiced breast self-examination. Of the 200 respondents
majority 192(96.0%) labeled that they had not ever examined
their breast by a doctor or nurse and only 8(4.0%) said they had
got their breasts examined by a doctor or a nurse. Among the
respondents 111(55.5%) said that they had heard about
mammogram while 89(44.5%) said that they had not ever heard
about mammogram. Of the 200 respondents 190(95.0%) had
no mammogram while only 10(5.0%) had a mammogram.

Analysis showed that among the 200 respondents 184(92.0%)
said that they had heard about the USG while 16(8.0%) had not
heard about USG. Amongst the total respondents 184(74.0%)
never had a USG but only 52(26.0) said that they had a USG
regarding breast examination (Table - III).

The respondents were asked a set of questions regarding breast
cancer screening practices or early detection practices for
breast cancer. Table - IV showed that they visited their physician
once every two years (µ= 3.78). In response to a question,
results. At national level there is no screening program in
Pakistan. Educating the women regarding breast cancer risk
factor constitutes a first step for early detection of breast
cancer.

Medical help seeking behavior of females may be influenced by
their awareness about breast cancer. Multiple studies have
examined the breast cancer screening practices among doctors
and university students but to our knowledge none of the
previous studies have inquired the matter among female nurses
at Public hospitals in South Punjab, Pakistan. Therefore the
present study is carried out with the intention to generate data
that can help the doctors to promote practices of screening for
breast cancer. This study is carried to evaluate the screening
practices of nurses in relation to breast cancer and its risk
factors.

METHODOLOGY

This cross sectionaobservational study was carried out in the
two public hospitals of District Multan, Pakistan i.e. The
Children’s Hospital and the Institute of Child Health Multan,
Pakistan and Nishtar Medical Hospital Multan, Pakistan from 1st
June 2015 to 30th November 2015. The study population is
comprised of the nurses working in the two public hospitals. The
charge nurses working on regular basis in the public hospitals
were included and other nursing college trainees were excluded
in the study. Questionnaire was used as a tool for the data
collection. Questionnaire was discussed with one expert from
the Sociology Department, Bahauddin Zakariya University
Multan, Pakistan and two senior doctors (>8 years’ experience)
working at Oncology Department, Nishtar Hospital and Medical
College Multan, Pakistan. Respondents’ secrecy and
confidentiality were ensured. Informed consent was obtained
from participants. The purpose of the study was explained to
respondents in detail during the data collection process.
Respondents were voluntarily participated in this study.
Respondents were also briefed and encouraged to ask for the
additional information or questions. Questionnaire was divided
in two parts. The part one of the questionnaire comprised of
questions relating to demographic information of the
respondents (e.g., age, marital status, education level, and
monthly income). The second part of the questionnaire consists
on questions relating to breast cancer risk factor, practices of
breast self examination and mammogram. It was revised to
incorporate the recommended improvements. To check the
validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was
carried out at the completion of 15 questionnaires. Statistically,
Portable IBM SPSS Statistics (Statistical Package for the Social
Sciences) version 20 was used to analyze data. The researcher
used descriptive statistics, which includes frequency,
percentage, mean and standard deviation.

RESULTS

Analysis showed that majority of the respondents 159(79.5%)
had received breast health information while 41(20.5%) had not
ever received breast health information. Greater part of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>96(48.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>53(26.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>35(17.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>09(4.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>05(2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 65</td>
<td>02(1.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>110(55.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>79(39.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>04(2.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>03(1.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education level</td>
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<tr>
<td>Matriculation</td>
<td>02(1.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>62(31.0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>103(51.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Degree</td>
<td>27(13.5%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>M.Phil.</td>
<td>06(3.0%)</td>
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</table>
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DISCUSSION

The present study was carried out to explore the breast cancer screening practices among nurses of public sector hospitals of Southern Punjab, Pakistan. The researcher used the questionnaire to achieve the objective of the study. The results of the study showed that screening practices among nurses were poor even they were aware of breast cancer. In our study majority of the respondents 71.5% reported that they had not ever practiced breast self-examination and only 28.5% said that they had practiced breast self-examination which was lower than the findings reported in a previous study that the frequency of breast screening examination were 57% in Malaysia and 62% and 94% reported from the nurses in Singapore. At initial stage advances in radiology imaging had made the diagnosis of breast cancer possible. For the early stage diagnosis of breast cancer in many developed countries had organized mammography screening programs when it was only a few mm in sizes. But in developing countries due to limited resources and minimum facility of mammography was opportunistic screening and diagnostic was poor. Recently mammography was also being talked about in the breast cancer awareness activities. In the present study 95.0% responded that they had no mammogram which was higher than the findings of previous studies that 60% of respondents had no clue about mammography and 71% of the urban women in India. Majority of the respondents also had heard about the USG (Ultrasonography), but still they had not practiced it because no one had ever asked them for screening practices. Only very few of the participants currently treated for chronic disease. Breast cancer society is also playing the vital role in breast cancer awareness and screening practices among the females, but we need more work especially in screening practices. It is necessary to endow them with BSE as a modality for screening.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that the knowledge and breast screening practices of female nurses is relatively poor and it needs to be improved.

RECOMMENDATION

There is a need to arrange awareness programs for nurses to improve the knowledge about breast cancer and breast screening practices. Periodic update courses for nurses are also recommended in health maintenance practices.

Authors Contribution
Ahmad T: Conceived Idea, Designed Methodology.
Ishfaq K: Literature Search, Manuscript Writing, Reference Citation
Mushtaque A: Design the questionnaire, Data Collection
Disclaimer: None.
Conflict of Interest: None.
Source of Funding: None.

REFERENCES