

Knowledge about and Attitude towards Breast Cancer and Screening Practices among Female School Teachers in Selected Schools in Batticaloa Educational Zone

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Breast cancer is the most frequent cancer of women worldwide as well as in Sri Lanka. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the occurrence of breast cancer is increasing. Breast cancer is often curable, if detected early. However, Sri Lankan females are not aware of the state or tend to suffer from this. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitude of breast cancer and screening practices among female schoolteachers in selected schools in Batticaloa educational zone. A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among 174 female teachers in selected schools in Batticaloa educational zone, including 3 divisions: Manmunai North, Eravur Pattu-1 and Manmunai Pattu. Simple random sampling method was used and self – administered questionnaires were used to collect the data. Frequencies and percentages were obtained through data analysis using SPSS version 19. A total of 174 participants were recruited for this study. Only 1.7% of participants had high knowledge on risk factors, signs and symptoms and treatment of breast cancer. Regarding knowledge on breast cancer screening, respectively breast self-examination 39%, clinical breast examination 25% and mammography 9% could identify correctly. The attitude of breast cancer occurrence was positive in the study population while attitudes about barriers for participation of breast cancer screening practices were poor. The knowledge on breast cancer and its screening were poor among the female teachers and it is recommended a greater focus on related education programs to improve the knowledge and to change misconceptions about breast cancer and to avoid barriers related screening practice of breast cancer as attitude regarding breast cancer screening is a major lacking part and should be attended and intervened.

Keywords: Breast cancer, Breast cancer screening, Breast self-examination, knowledge, Attitude and barriers

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