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Awareness and Knowledge about Breast Cancer among Indian Women

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ABSTRACT

Breast cancer is one of the common cancer cases among women in India. There is a high mortality due to late stage diagnosis as patients usually present at an advanced stage because of lack of awareness and nonexistent breast cancer screening programs. The aim of this study was to assess the level of knowledge and awareness of breast Cancer and breast self-examination in females. This was a community based study carried out in Delhi. A sample of 150 females was collected. Entire procedure was explained to them in their comfortable language and informed consent was obtained from them. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data by using face to face interview method. Data were collected from 150 females. The age of the study participants was ranged between 19 and 45 years. Most of them were aware of breast carcinoma (80 %). Further, 120 (80 %) had knowledge of at least one of the symptoms and 112 (74.6 %) knew at least one of the risk factors for breast carcinoma. Only 52 (34.6%) women knew about BSE. This study concluded that the awareness of the breast cancer was good but the knowledge of risk factors and signs of Breast Cancer were not that good, which is of very importance in early detection and in reduction of mortality.

KEYWORDS: Breast Cancer, Awareness, Indian Women.

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INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is the second most common cancer overall and is the most common cancer in women worldwide, both in the developed and developing countries. There are about 1.38 million new cases and 458,000 deaths from breast cancer each year.³ In India, cancer prevalence is estimated around 2.5 million, with over 0.8 million new cases and 0.5 million deaths occurring each year.¹ Breast cancer is not only a disease of the rich but low and middle-income countries are also affected. In fact, more than half (58%) of women who die from breast cancer live in poor countries. This could be because of weak health systems and limited access to early diagnosis and treatment. Women in these countries are likely to be diagnosed only at a late stage of breast cancer and in many settings; even access to supportive and palliative care is lacking.³ Late diagnosis is a major factor for this high mortality as most patients present in advanced stage of the disease. This is attributed to lack of awareness and non-existent breast cancer screening programs in India. Therefore, we conducted this study to identify the breast cancer awareness among Indian females. In this study, we focussed on awareness about the signs and symptoms, risk factors, preventive measures, treatment and breast self examination.

AIM AND OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study was to identify the knowledge and awareness of breast cancer among the Indian females.

METHODOLOGY

Type of study – observational study

Sample size – 150

Inclusion criteria –

- Sex: females.
- Age: 19 – 26 years of age

Exclusion criteria –

- Age more than 26.
- Subjects who are not comprehensive.

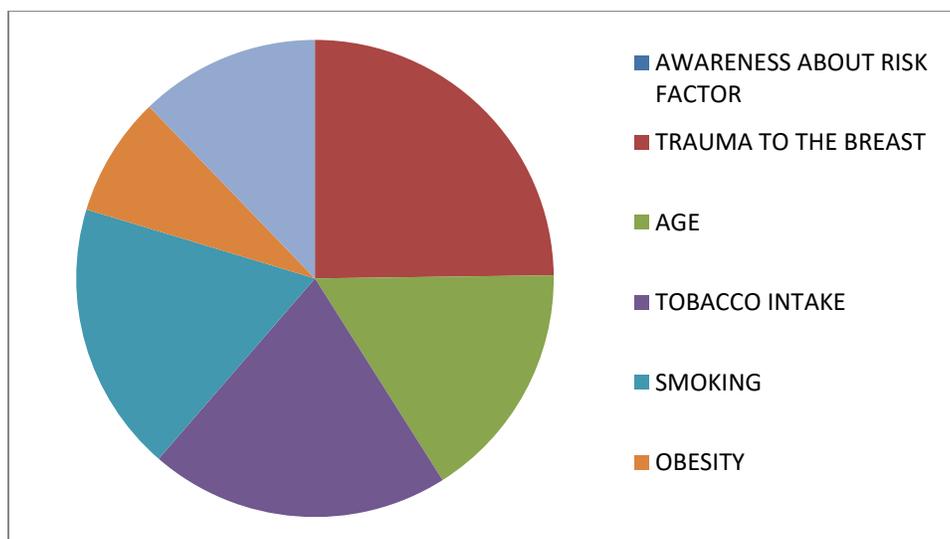
Procedure –

A sample of 150 females was collected. Entire procedure was explained to them and informed consent was obtained from them. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data by using face to face interview method. Questionnaire consists of the following details:

- Socio-demographic information such as age, marital status, education.
- Awareness of Breast Cancer
- Risks factors of Breast Cancer
- Symptoms of Breast Cancer
- Knowledge about preventive measures
- Breast cancer examination

RESULT

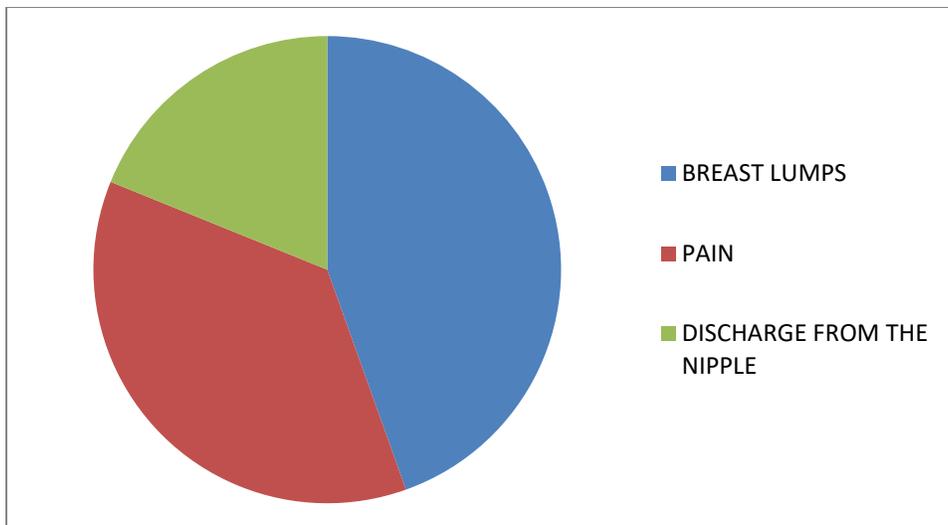
Out of total 150 participants, only 120 (80 %) had heard about breast cancer. Awareness about this was more among participants who were more educated (85 %). In our study, Breast Cancer awareness rate was related to educational status of subjects. In this study, we could not be able to identify any relationship between awareness and age, religion.



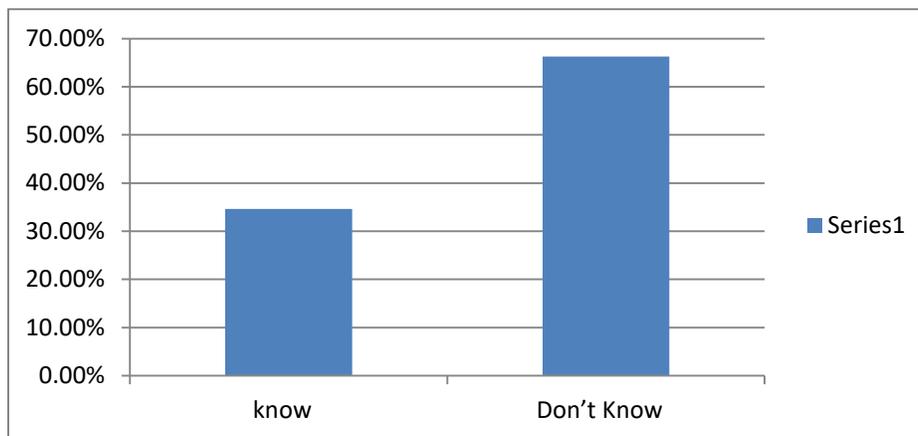
Graph 1: Awareness about risk factors of Breast cancer

Table 1 to 5- Showing collected data

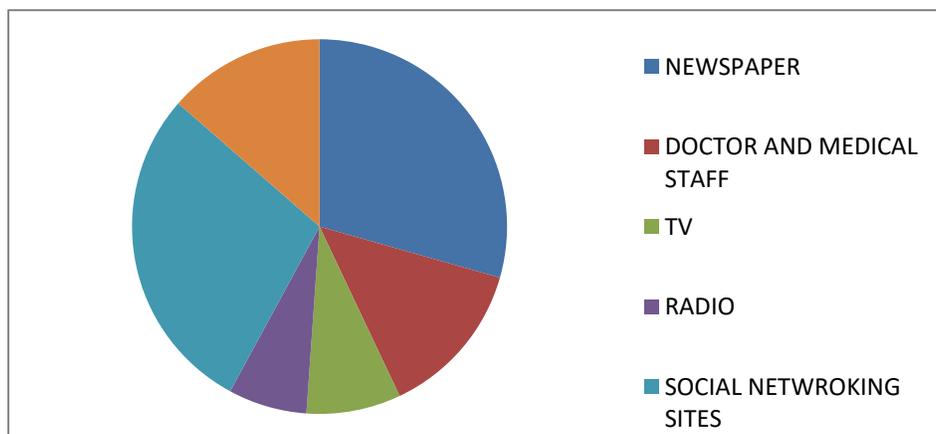
<p>AWARENESS ABOUT RISK FACTORS OF BREAST CANCER</p>	<p>Table 1 - Knowledge about risk factors was assessed</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Trauma to the breast</td> <td>70 (40.6 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td>40 (26.6 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tobacco intake</td> <td>50 (33.3%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Smoking</td> <td>45 (30%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Obesity</td> <td>20 (13.3 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not aware of any factor</td> <td>30 (20 %)</td> </tr> </table>	Trauma to the breast	70 (40.6 %)	Age	40 (26.6 %)	Tobacco intake	50 (33.3%)	Smoking	45 (30%)	Obesity	20 (13.3 %)	Not aware of any factor	30 (20 %)
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<p>WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ITS SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?</p>	<p>Table 2 - Knowledge about the signs and symptoms of Breast cancer</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Breast lumps</td> <td>118 (78.6 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pain</td> <td>97 (64.6 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discharge from the nipple</td> <td>50 (33.3%)</td> </tr> </table>	Breast lumps	118 (78.6 %)	Pain	97 (64.6 %)	Discharge from the nipple	50 (33.3%)						
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<p>AWARENESS ABOUT BREAST SELF - EXAMINATION</p>	<p>Table 3 - Awareness about self examination was assessed</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Know</td> <td>52 (34.6 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td>98 (66.3 %)</td> </tr> </table>	Know	52 (34.6 %)	Don't know	98 (66.3 %)								
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<p>AWARENESS ABOUT THE PREVENTIVE MEASURES</p>	<p>Table 4- Awareness about protective measures</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Self screening</td> <td>30 (20 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nutritional Status</td> <td>18 (12 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Don't know</td> <td>119(79.3 %)</td> </tr> </table>	Self screening	30 (20 %)	Nutritional Status	18 (12 %)	Don't know	119(79.3 %)						
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Don't know	119(79.3 %)												
<p>SOURCE OF INFORMATION (Subjects who were aware of Breast Cancer)</p>	<p>Table 5 - Source of information</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Newspaper</td> <td>65 (43.3 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Doctor and medical staff</td> <td>30 (20 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tv</td> <td>18 (12 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Radio</td> <td>15 (10 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social networking sites</td> <td>63 (42 %)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Family and friend</td> <td>30 (20 %)</td> </tr> </table>	Newspaper	65 (43.3 %)	Doctor and medical staff	30 (20 %)	Tv	18 (12 %)	Radio	15 (10 %)	Social networking sites	63 (42 %)	Family and friend	30 (20 %)
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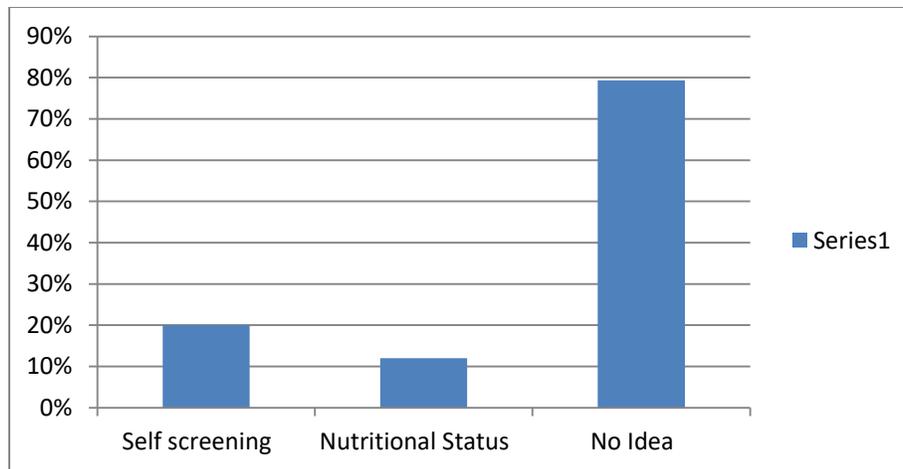
Graph 2 – Awareness about its signs and symptoms



Graph 3: Awareness about self-examination of Breast Cancer



Graph 4: Awareness about the Preventive Measures



Graph 5: Awareness about protective measures to be taken

DISCUSSION

In the present study, awareness of breast cancer among the participants was 80 % which was higher than the study done by Kumar *M et* 75.9%.² In A study done by mahima kumara et al, 59% of females were unaware of breast cancer, which is high in comparison to our study. However, this rate is higher than the rate reported.⁴

Studies done by Kumar *et al.* and Seth *et al.* have shown low awareness levels of risk factors,³ which is similar to the our study. Different types of screening methods are available among which BSE is the best way for early detection, which is also cost-effective. If women are educated properly on this technique, it can be the best tool for screening the disease; knowledge and awareness regarding BSE is utmost important for early detection and in reduction of mortality¹ however, in our study, only 20 % women had knowledge regarding self - examination.

There is an urgent need to explore the drivers of Understanding the drivers and barriers is important for strategic and effective awareness programs and/or interventions on prevention and early detection.⁵

Awareness to make population aware about the risk factors and preventive measure is needed. Also there is need to increase the level of awareness of population about the self – examination of breast because it is a useful measure for early detection of breast cancer.

Clinical relevance: Lack of awareness about the risk factors and symptoms of the disease is the main cause of late detection of this cancer- at a stage that they can no more be cured.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the awareness of the breast cancer was good but the knowledge about risk factors, protective measures are less. We can say that there is a need for awareness generation programs to educate women about the risk factors and preventative measures of breast cancer

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