

Factors Related to Awareness of Breast Cancer Screening Activities among Arabic-speaking Women in Qatar: A cross sectional study

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Abstract

Introduction:

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the State of Qatar and the incidence rate is rising. Previous findings indicate women in Qatar are often diagnosed with breast cancer at advanced stages and their awareness of breast cancer screening services and participation rates in screening activities are low. The objective of this study is to find ways to effectively promote breast cancer screening uptake by investigating factors related to Arabic-speaking women's awareness of breast cancer screening (BCS) activities in Qatar.

Methods:

A multi-center, cross-sectional quantitative survey of 1,063 (87.5% response rate) female Qatari citizens and non-Qatari Arabic-speaking residents, 35 years of age or older, was conducted in Qatar from March 2011 to July 2011. Outcome measures included participant awareness levels of the most recent national recommended guidelines of BCS, their participation rates in BCS activities, and factors related to awareness of BCS activities.

Results:

While most participants (90.7%) were aware of breast cancer, only 28.9% were aware of breast self-examination, 41.8% of clinical breast exams, and 26.4% of mammography as recommended by national screening guidelines (only 7.6% had knowledge of all three BCS activities). Regarding BCS practice, 13.9% of the women interviewed performed BSE monthly, 31.3% had a CBE once a year or once every two years, and 26.9% of women 40 years of age or older had a mammogram once every year or two years. Awareness of BCS was significantly related to education levels and receiving information about breast cancer and/or BCS from a variety of sources, particularly physicians and the media.

Conclusion:

Low levels of awareness and participation rates in BCS among Arabic women indicate the need for awareness of and compliance with the most recent breast cancer screening guideline recommendations in Qatar. Predictors of awareness and participation in BCS activities include higher education levels and receiving information about BCS from health care providers or the media. Enhanced roles of health care providers and the implementation of mass media and public health campaigns aimed at raising awareness of breast cancer, BCS, and the benefits of early detection of breast cancer may help increase screening rates and reduce mortality rates amongst Arabic-speaking women living in the State of Qatar.