



## A STUDY ON BREAST CANCER AWARENESS AMONG FEMALE PATIENTS IN PONDICHERRY PRIVATE MEDICAL COLLEGE.

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### ABSTRACT

Breast cancer accounts for 19-34 % of all 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 late lack of awareness and non-existent breast cancer screening programs. There is a need for awareness for women about breast cancer, propagation of correct messages and promote early detection of breast cancer.

### INTRODUCTION

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- To assess the awareness among female patients about breast cancer who are attending private medical college, MVMCH opd
- To assess the knowledge about the symptoms for early detection of breast cancer and its outcome
- To assess the knowledge about the investigations for diagnosing breast cancer among female patients in MVMCH.
- To assess the knowledge about the treatment modalities for breast cancer among female patients in MVMCH.

### METHODOLOGY

#### Study Details:

Descriptive cross-sectional study, Hospital based setting, 1000 cases. The study population was women attending MVMCH opd above the age of 18 yrs.

### Research Instruments

Researchers developed questionnaire consisting of nineteen (19) items were used. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections.

Section one contains demographic information of the respondents while section two contains information on the knowledge about the symptoms for early detection of breast cancer and its outcome, section three contains information on the respondents knowledge about investigations for breast cancer, section four contains knowledge about treatment modalities.

### Procedure:

Data for the study were collected using self designed structured questionnaire. The instrument was tested for validity and reliability by an expert in the field and all corrections were corrected before final usage. It consisted of closed and open ended questions that were used to collect data that would meet objectives of the study. The questionnaire was distributed to all respondents, same was interpreted to those who were non literate, and all questionnaires were retrieved from the respondents. The questionnaire has four sections.

- Approval for the study was obtained from the ethical committee of , Also, informed consent was obtained from each respondent and they were assured of their

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confidentiality and anonymity of the information provided.

- Research is conducted at all times by competent and qualified persons.
- Patient will not be asked to pay for anything

**Table 1 :Demographic data of respondents**

| AGE [years]       | FREQUENCY        | PERCENTAGE (%)    |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 18-25             | 538              | 51.53             |
| 26-35             | 215              | 20.59             |
| 35-45             | 171              | 16.38             |
| Above 45          | 120              | 11.49             |
| Overall           | 1044             | 100.00            |
| <b>Literacy</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Literate          | 1006             | 96.36             |
| Illiterate        | 38               | 3.64              |
| <b>RELIGION</b>   | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Hindu             | 758              | 72.60             |
| Muslim            | 175              | 16.76             |
| Christian         | 201              | 19.25             |
| Others            | 15               | 1.43              |
| <b>OCCUPATION</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
| Farming           | 258              | 24.71             |
| Housewife         | 647              | 61.97             |
| Students          | 39               | 3.73              |
| Hospital workers  | 45               | 4.31              |
| Others            | 55               | 3.35              |

**Table 2: Awareness among females about breast cancer according to their age**

| Sl.No | Age      | Mean age $\pm$ SD     | Mean score $\pm$ SD  |
|-------|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1     | 18-25    | 20.226 $\pm$ 2.8929   | 11.594 $\pm$ 2.31731 |
| 2     | 26-35    | 31.065 $\pm$ 3.21     | 11.827 $\pm$ 2.3607  |
| 3     | 35-45    | 39.672 $\pm$ 2.4297   | 11.7193 $\pm$ 2.418  |
| 2     | Above 45 | 55.158 $\pm$ 7.549    | 11.5833 $\pm$ 2.4065 |
| 5     | Overall  | 29.659 $\pm$ 12.30589 | 10.691 $\pm$ 2.3356  |

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviations of females according to their age. The highest mean and standard deviation comes from above 45 years of females (55.158 $\pm$ 7.549)

**Table 3: Awareness among females about breast cancer according to their literacy**

| Sl.No | Literacy   | Mean age $\pm$ SD     | Mean score $\pm$ SD |
|-------|------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1     | Literate   | 29.6878 $\pm$ 12.3409 | 11.961 $\pm$ 2.3356 |
| 2     | Illiterate | 28.894 $\pm$ 11.465   | 10.868 $\pm$ 2.6627 |

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviations of females according to their literacy. The highest mean and standard deviation comes from literate females (29.6878 $\pm$ 12.3409)

**Table 4: Mean percentage of awareness among females about breast cancer according to their age.**

| Sl.No | Age      | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|----------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | 18-25    | 11.594     | 2.31731            | 52.703          |
| 2     | 26-35    | 11.827     | 2.3607             | 53.763          |
| 3     | 35-45    | 11.7193    | 2.418              | 53.269          |
| 4     | Above 45 | 11.5833    | 2.4065             | 52.65           |
| 5     | Overall  | 10.691     | 2.3356             | 48.59           |

Table 4 shows the mean percentage of awareness among females about breast cancer according to their age. It shows that females aged between 26 to 35 has highest knowledge about awareness (53.763).



**Table 5: Mean percentage of awareness among females about breast cancer according to their literacy.**

| Sl.No | Age        | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Literate   | 11.961     | 2.3356             | 53.144          |
| 2     | Illiterate | 10.868     | 2.6627             | 49.401          |

Table 5 shows mean percentage of awareness among females about breast cancer according to their literacy. It shows that literate females have highest knowledge (53.144) when comparing to illiterate females (49.401)

**Table 6: Knowledge about symptoms among females about breast cancer according to their age.**

| Sl.No | Age      | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|----------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | 18-25    | 3.172      | 1.2043             | 52.88           |
| 2     | 26-35    | 3.265      | 1.2033             | 54.41           |
| 3     | 35-45    | 3.3040     | 1.2929             | 55.068          |
| 2     | Above 45 | 3.225      | 1.141              | 53.75           |
| 5     | Overall  | 3.0576     | 1.2405             | 50.9609         |

Table 6 shows the mean percentage of knowledge about symptoms among females about breast cancer according to their age. It shows that females aged between 35 to 45 have highest knowledge about awareness (55.068).

**Table 7: Knowledge about symptoms among females about breast cancer according to their literacy.**

| Sl.No | Age        | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Literate   | 3.22664    | 1.2046             | 53.777          |
| 2     | Illiterate | 3.0263     | 1.3849             | 50.438          |

Table 7 shows mean percentage of knowledge about symptoms among females about breast cancer according to their literacy. It shows that literate females have highest knowledge (53.777) when comparing to illiterate females (50.438)

**Table 8: Knowledge about the investigations for diagnosing among females about breast cancer according to their age.**

| Sl.No | Age      | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|----------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | 18-25    | 4.9572     | 1.6                | 49.572          |
| 2     | 26-35    | 5.1488     | 1.55166            | 51.4883         |
| 3     | 35-45    | 4.871      | 1.547              | 48.713          |
| 2     | Above 45 | 5.125      | 1.678              | 51.25           |
| 5     | Overall  | 4.964      | 1.5993             | 49.642          |

Table 8 shows the mean percentage of knowledge about the investigations for diagnosing among females about breast cancer according to their age. It shows that females aged between 26 to 35 have highest knowledge about awareness (51.4883).

**Table 9: Knowledge about the investigations for diagnosing among females about breast cancer according to their literacy.**

| Sl.No | Age        | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Literate   | 4.995      | 1.585              | 49.95           |
| 2     | Illiterate | 5.184      | 1.783              | 51.842          |

Table 9 shows mean percentage of knowledge about the investigations for diagnosing among females about breast cancer according to their literacy. It shows that illiterate females have highest knowledge (51.842) when comparing to literate females (49.95)

**Table 10: Knowledge about treatment modalities among females about breast cancer according to their age.**

| Sl.No | Age      | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|----------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | 18-25    | 2.007      | 0.9953             | 50.185          |
| 2     | 26-35    | 1.981      | 0.985              | 49.534          |
| 3     | 35-45    | 2.0409     | 0.941              | 51.0233         |
| 2     | Above 45 | 1.875      | 1.0576             | 46.875          |
| 5     | Overall  | 1.987      | 0.9919             | 49.676          |

Table 10 shows the mean percentage of knowledge about treatment modalities among females about breast cancer according to their age. It shows that females aged between 35 to 45 have highest knowledge about awareness (51.0233).



**Table 11: Knowledge about treatment modalities among females about breast cancer according to their literacy.**

| Sl.No | Age        | Mean score | Standard Deviation | Mean percentage |
|-------|------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 1     | Literate   | 2.1315     | 0.9919             | 53.289          |
| 2     | Illiterate | 1.987      | 0.99107            | 49.676          |

Table 11 shows mean percentage of knowledge about treatment modalities among females about breast cancer according to their literacy. It shows that literate females have highest knowledge (53.289) when comparing to illiterate females (49.676)

### Discussion:

Breast cancer is the most common malignancy affecting women, with more than one million cases occurring worldwide annually. In India, it is the second commonest cancer among females. Though it can be detected early by self and clinical breast examination or mammography, in our country only 15% patients present in the localized stage; in 75% regional lymph nodes are already involved while 10% have distant spread at the time of reporting.(1) This is due to lack of awareness and nonexistent breast cancer screening programmes. Early detection and prompt treatment offer the greatest chance of long term survival and breast self examination (BSE) seems to be an important viable optional substitute for early detection of cancer.(2)

The study was carried out to find out the awareness among female patients about breast cancer who are attending MVMCH opd . findings from this study however revealed that majority of women had insufficient knowledge about breast cancer . These findings were similar to those of these studies of other Asian countries showing below average awareness about the existence of breast cancer and their symptoms .

Our findings confirmed the previous reports<sup>(8,13-15)</sup> that the deficit in the knowledge of symptoms and risk factors might be the reason for the delayed presentation in breast cancer in developing countries . However , in developed nations where there is a diminution in mortality secondary to early detection and improved treatment modalities<sup>(16-17)</sup>, delayed presentation remains a problem for older women as seen in British , American and Australian women

It is also noteworthy that illiterate women lack sufficient knowledge on risk factors and management of breast cancer .

### Conclusion:

In our sample all 1044 females are above 18 years old. Their overall mean percentage score is 48.59. This level of knowledge about breast cancer is not enough to declare that the females have adequate knowledge about breast cancer. So by interpreting the result we found that the females in our sample didn't have adequate knowledge about breast cancer awareness. Thus, more educational programs could be designed to provide comprehensive information of breast cancer and BSE to improve women's knowledge and awareness which can help in the early detection and reporting of breast cancer for the better treatment.

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