Knowledge, Awareness and Practices Concerning of Breast Cancer among Nursing Students in Sri Lanka

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Abstract : Background: Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer mortality in women worldwide. Its incidence is increasing and young women affected more than ever. Nursing students are the future nurses who will have the opportunity to encourage and influence women to be aware of breast cancers. Objectives: To determine the level of knowledge, awareness and practices concerning of breast cancer among Sri Lankan student nurses. Methods: A descriptive cross sectional study was conducted on 150 nursing students who are in their 2nd and 3rd year studies by distributing a standard self-administered questionnaire. The completed questionnaire were retrieved, graded and scored. Results: Mean age of the respondents was 24.27; (SD=1.66) years and ranged from 20-30 years. Most of the students were female which was 85%. 32% of nursing students scored below 55% for the questionnaire and only 7.3% had good overall knowledge and awareness of breast cancer. Out of 128 female students 89.9% were answered that they know how to perform Breast Self Examination (BSE), out of which 37% of them performed BSE regularly. Only 33% were aware of recommended age for BSE and 10% were knew the recommended age for mammography. 9.3% were aware of frequency for Clinical Breast Examination on 20-39 years of age group. Of the female participants, 11.7% reported positive family history of breast cancer. Conclusion: Nursing students should explore to health educational programs on regular basis on breast cancer and its screening methods. Further studies are needed to identify reasons for not practicing BSE.