Understanding Jordanian Women's Values and Beliefs Related to Prevention and Early Detection of Breast Cancer

Authors : Khlood F. Salman, Richard Zoucha, Hani Nawafleh

Abstract : Introduction: Jordan ranks the fourth highest breast cancer prevalence after Lebanon, Bahrain, and Kuwait. Considerable evidence showed that cultural, ethnic, and economic differences influence a woman's practice to early detection and prevention of breast cancer. Objectives: To understand women's health beliefs and values in relation to early detection of breast cancer; and to explore the impact of these beliefs on their decisions regarding reluctance or acceptance of early detection measures such as mammogram screening. Design: A qualitative focused ethnography was used to collect data for this study. Settings: The study was conducted in the second largest city surrounded by a large rural area in Ma'an- Jordan. Participants: A total of twenty seven women, with no history of breast cancer, between the ages of 18 and older, who had prior health experience with health providers, and were willing to share elements of personal health beliefs related to breast health within the larger cultural context. The participants were recruited using the snowball method and words of mouth. Data collection and analysis: A short questionnaire was designed to collect data related to socio demographic status (SDQ) from all participants. A Semi-structured interviews guide was used to elicit data through interviews with the informants. Nvivo10 a data manager was utilized to assist with data analysis. Leininger's four phases of qualitative data analysis was used as a guide for the data analysis. The phases used to analyze the data included: 1) Collecting and documenting raw data, 2) Identifying of descriptors and categories according to the domains of inquiry and research questions. Emic and etic data is coded for similarities and differences, 3) Identifying patterns and contextual analysis, discover saturation of ideas and recurrent patterns, and 4) Identifying themes and theoretical formulations and recommendations. Findings: Three major themes were emerged within the cultural and religious context; 1. Fear, denial, embarrassment and lack of knowledge were common perceptions of Ma'anis' women regarding breast health and screening mammography, 2. Health care professionals in Jordan were not quick to offer information and education about breast cancer and screening, and 3. Willingness to learn about breast health and cancer prevention. Conclusion: The study indicated the disparities between the infrastructure and resourcing in rural and urban areas of Jordan, knowledge deficit related to breast cancer, and lack of education about breast health may impact women's decision to go for a mammogram screening. Cultural beliefs, fear, embarrassments as well as providers lack of focus on breast health were significant contributors against practicing breast health. Health providers and policy makers should provide resources for the establishment health education programs regarding breast cancer early detection and mammography screening. Nurses should play a major role in delivering health education about breast health in general and breast cancer in particular. A culturally appropriate health awareness messages can be used in creating educational programs which can be employed at the national levels.

Keywords : breast health, beliefs, cultural context, ethnography, mammogram screening
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