

Knowledge and Utilization of Mammography among Undergraduate Female Students in a Nigerian University

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Abstract : Background: Like the rest of the world, cancer of the breast is a life-threatening disease to Nigerian women. The utilization of mammography is however very poor among the general population. Whereas, there strong indications that women who engage in the regular screening of breast cancer using mammography are more likely to have a lower risk of developing and dying from advanced breast cancer compared to unscreened women. This study examined knowledge of breast cancer and utilization of mammography among undergraduate female students at the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. Health Belief Model (HBM) was deployed to guide the conduct of the study. Method: Self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from 292 undergraduate female students from the faculties of Social and Management Sciences of the University. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Results: The study found that apart from high knowledge of breast cancer and mammography, perceived threat, perceived susceptibility and perceived seriousness of breast cancer were equally high. However, the uptake of mammography was very poor largely due to perceived barriers including being single and young and poor history of breast cancer in families (cues to action). The test of hypotheses showed that there is a weak relationship of about 6.8% between knowledge of breast cancer and utilization of mammography (p-value= 0.244) at 0.05 level of significance. However, 64.4% of the respondents were willing to utilize mammography in the future if the opportunity arises. While the study found a significant statistical relationship between the perceived benefits of mammography and its utilization among the respondents, no significant statistical association was found between the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and the uptake of mammography. Recommendations: Findings highlight the need for health education interventions to promote breast cancer screening and the utilization mammography, while addressing barriers to the uptake of mammography among female undergraduate students of the University of Ilorin and Nigeria in general.

Keywords : cancer of the breast, mammography, female undergraduate students, health belief model, University of Ilorin

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