



## Evaluation of Breast Cancer Awareness among girls' hostel students in VHNSN College

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### Abstract

The objective of this study were to assess the knowledge of breast cancer among students at girls' hostel of VHNSN College, Virudhunagar and to estimate the student's awareness on breast self examination (BSE). The questionnaire covered the personal information, knowledge of breast cancer; BSE and screening test for breast cancer. A total of 250 students contributed in the study. In our study 3 of the students had heard about BSE but only 2 practiced it. The study results revealed that students did not know the correct procedure to perform BSE. Our finding indicates that a majority of participants in VHNSN College does not practice BSE as a screening method for the early detection of breast cancer. Also, most of the students have never been to any adequate facility for the clinical examination of breast.

**Keywords:** Breast cancer, breast self examination, mammography

### Introduction

Breast cancer is the primary cause of cancer in women in the western world and is emerging as the primary cancer in women in India as well (Reddy *et al.*, 2012). It has been reported that each year over 1.5 million women are diagnosed with breast cancer all over the world and more than a

half million die from this disease (WHO, 2008). The main cause for this increasing mortality is lack of awareness and late diagnosis of breast cancer (Pinnoti *et al.*, 1995). Mammography, clinical breast examination (CBE) and breast self examination (BSE) are screening methods used for early detection (Peto *et al.*, 2000). BSE is an important, cheap and easy method for early diagnosis of breast cancer. Among these, annual mammography is considered to be the most helpful technique for the diagnosis of breast cancer in its early stage (Rosenberg and LevySchwartz, 2003). The aim of the study was to assess the awareness of VHNSN College girls' hostel students about breast cancer and breast self examination.

### Materials and Methods

Study was carried out in girls' hostel of VHNSN College, Virudhunagar, at September 2018. The estimated sample size remained 250. The questionnaire was developed based on information of age, education level marital status and student's knowledge about breast cancer; breast self examination and awareness about mammography.

### Results

A total of 250 girls' hostel students were interviewed. The inclusion criteria were the age 17 to 22 years, ability to understand English language and voluntarily willingness for the participation in the study. Two hundred and forty nine of the students were single. Of the 250 students, 188 had completed formal school education and 62 had either completed undergraduate (Table 1).

The results about breast cancer awareness are summarized in Table 2 which shows that overall more than 208 girls were aware of the breast cancer. When the students were asked about their knowledge regarding breast self examination, it was found that only 3 participants were aware. Only 3 students correctly identified the lump on breast.

### Discussion

This study provided important data about the awareness of risk factors and symptoms of breast cancer among girls' hostel students in VHNSN College. Good knowledge of breast cancer symptoms is very essential for early diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. In our study 3 of the students had heard about breast self examination but only 2 practiced it. The study results revealed that students were not aware breast self examination and did not know the correct

procedure to perform BSE. Similar observations were made by Reem Musallam Al Junaibi and Shah Alam Khan, 2011 and Gwarzo *et al.*, 2009. Only 3 students were aware of the danger of a painless breast lump, but knowledge without implementation is of no use. Breast cancer knowledge of participants was inadequate in various aspects these data suggest the need of more education programs on breast cancer. A study showed that finance is the only barrier for clinical breast examination. Similar experiment was carried out in Delhi by Dey, 2016.

### Conclusion

Our result indicates that a majority of participants in VHNSN College does not practice breast self-examination as a screening method for the early detection of breast cancer. Also, most of the students have never been to any adequate facility for the clinical examination of breast. Thus, more awareness programs could be designed to provide complete information of breast cancer and BSE to improve women's knowledge which can help in the early detection and reporting of breast cancer for the better treatment.

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**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Students**

Characteristics	Numbers
<b>Age (Years)</b>	
17-22	250
<b>Grade</b>	
School	188
College	62
<b>Academic Year</b>	
<b>Undergraduate</b>	
First year	64
Second Year	75
Third Year	49
<b>Postgraduate</b>	
First year	30
Second Year	32
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single	249
Married	1

**Table 2: Breast Cancer Awareness**

Characteristics	Numbers	
	UG	PG
<b>Breast Cancer knowledge</b>		
Aware	160	48
Not-Aware	29	14
<b>Breast Self Examination (BSE) Awareness</b>		
Aware	3	0
Not-Aware	185	62
<b>Trained to feel the lump on breast</b>		
Yes	3	0
No	185	62
<b>Awareness about Mammography</b>		
Yes	6	2
No	182	60