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Knowledge, attitude and practices of cervical cancer screening among female health care professionals in Saudi Arabia: A cross-sectional survey

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Introduction & Aim: Among women in developing countries, cervical cancer is the most common type of cancers and a leading cause of mortality. Our review revealed a lack of available literature on the knowledge and awareness of screening for this cancer in the Middle East. Therefore, we aimed to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of breast and cervical cancer screening among female healthcare professionals at King Fahad Medical City (KFMC), Saudi Arabia.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted at KFMC. A pre-designed and tested, self-administered, questionnaire was distributed to 420 female health care professionals. Data collection was anonymously completed from December 2017 to April 2018. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize responses of the knowledge, attitude and practice questions.

Results: Three-hundred and ninety-five participants were included in the final analysis. The mean age of the participants was 34.7 years, majority were married 239 (60.5%) and 201 (51%) had one or more children. The respondents were mainly nurses, 261 (66.1%) or physicians 63 (16.0%). Only 16 (4.2%) participants appeared to have good level of knowledge of cervical cancer. Majority of the participants disagreed with the statements for assessing attitude towards cervical cancer (proportion disagreed ranged from 53-86%). Majority 343 (88%) responded that Pap smear is a useful tool for early detection of cervical cancer but only 103 (26%) had undergone through the screening.

Conclusion: Participants showed low level of knowledge and negative attitudes towards screening for cervical cancer. Health care organizations need to encourage women of older age group particularly above 40 years of age for screening and educate them about the significance of screening in the absence of symptoms.

Biography

Humariya Heena is a Senior Clinical Research Specialist and a key member of the research center at King Fahad Medical City, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia with a passion for the scientific writing. She has years of experience in research, epidemiology and teaching. She has an MD degree in Community Medicine. She works with researchers on varied research projects like clinical trials and observational studies. Also, she is actively involved in writing and editing proposals, manuscripts and scientific literature.

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