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Knowledge and attitudes regarding cervical cancer and screening among women visiting primary health care centers in Bahrain

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Background: Cervical cancer is one of the most common cancers among women. Nearly all cases of cervical cancer can be attributed to human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. Cervical cancer screening is opportunistic in the Kingdom of Bahrain with low uptake. The objective of this study is to explore the knowledge, attitude and practices of women attending primary care health centres towards cervical cancer screening.

Methods: This is a cross sectional study of 300 women attending primary health care centres in Bahrain. We used a validated tool comprising of 45 items to collect data in a face to face interviews between December 2015 till February 2016. Descriptive analysis is presented for demographic data and frequency distribution with percentage is presented for each item in the knowledge and attitude questionnaire.

Results: The mean age (SD) of participants is 37.24 (11.89), mostly married (73.7%) with high school or higher education (68.30%). Just over 64% had ever heard about Pap smear and only 3.7% had heard about HPV vaccine. The percentage of participants answering knowledge questions correctly ranged between low to average. However, most of them reported positive attitude towards both cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine. Nevertheless, the majority would feel embarrassed if examined by a male doctor (83.3%) and few would go for screening if they were not ever married (23.0%).

Conclusion: Despite the low to average knowledge of cervical cancer screening, participants in this study demonstrated positive attitude towards cervical cancer screening and HPV vaccine. Results are fundamental to inform health policy makers when they plan future introduction of HPV vaccine and for improvement of the uptake of cervical cancer screening.

Biography

Ghufran Jassim has graduated in Medicine from Arabian Gulf University in Bahrain. She was trained as a Family Physician and completed the Arab Board and Irish Board in Family Medicine. She has also graduated from Arabian Gulf University with a Master's degree in Health Policy and Population Studies. In 2014, she was awarded a PhD degree in General Practice from the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. The title of her PhD was: Quality of life of Bahraini women with breast cancer. In 2015, she has completed a one year program in Global Clinical Scholars Research Training at Harvard Medical School-Harvard University. Last year she has graduated from the Health Education Profession Diploma Program at RCSI. She is the Coordinator of Evidence Based Health Module at RCSI Bahrain. She has published more than 20 papers in reputed journals and is the Editor-in-chief of the Journal of Bahrain Medical Society.

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