

Promoting Breast Cancer Awareness and Screening Practices for Early Detection in Low-Resource Settings

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer among women in the Philippines. Philippines has one of the highest breast cancer mortality rate and the lowest mortality-to-incidence ratio in Asia. This study has three objectives: 1) explore Filipino women's knowledge, attitudes toward, and practices of breast cancer and cancer screening, 2) examine if an educational program increases women's intention to seek future breast cancer screening, and 3) examine associations between demographic variables and breast cancer screening practices.

Materials and Methods: A total of 944 women from two urban areas (Calasciao and Tacloban City) and one rural area (Sogood) of the Philippines participated in this cross-sectional study. Study participants attended an educational program and completed study questionnaires regarding demographics, knowledge about, and practices of breast self-exams, clinical breast exams and mammography as well as reported barriers toward future screening.

Results: The results showed a disparity between knowledge of routine breast cancer screening and actual screening behaviors. Following breast health education and screening programs, participants reported greater intention to adhere to recommended breast cancer screening guidelines. The multivariate analyses showed that education level is a significant predictor for CBE and mammography uptake in current study.

Conclusion: This study has implications for breast cancer control among women in low-resources settings. Designing and implementing effective educational programs that increase women's awareness about breast cancer and promote screening uptake are important steps to reduce the burden affected by breast cancer among women in the Philippines and other South Asian low- to middle-income countries.

Keywords: Breast neoplasms, breast cancer screening, clinical breast exams, mammography, health education

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