



Knowledge and Practice of Breast Self-Examination Among Female Nursing Students in University of Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Breast cancer appears to be a disease of both developing and developed nations; it is the leading cause of death universally and responsible for about 12% of death throughout the world. The risk of breast cancer increases with age. The primary factor that increases breast cancer in women includes certain genetic mutations, personal family history of breast cancer and biopsy confirming hyperplasia. The purpose of breast self-examination is to learn the topography of the breast which will allow one to notice changes in the breast such as breast lumps or masses. Breast self-examination is done monthly between the 7th and 10th day of menstrual cycle which is early identification of abnormality and is also a low risk procedure that do not cause pain or discomfort. The aim of the study is to evaluate the knowledge and practice of female students in relation to breast self-examination. A non-experimental descriptive study was used to examine the knowledge and practice of breast self-examination among female nursing students of the department of nursing science, university of Maiduguri. A self-structured questionnaire with a content validity and reliability of 0.82 and 0.78 respectively. Using Yemem's formula, sample size of one hundred and nine (109) respondents were selected from 100 level to 500 level nursing students using simple random sampling technique after the use of stratified random sampling which ensured that each strata (class level) was represented in the study. All data were analyzed using frequency and percentages and presented in tables. Chi-square statistic with 0.05 level of significant was used in testing the developed hypothesis. The findings shows that the majority of the students have knowledge on breast self-examination and they also practice breast self-examination. All hypotheses tested showed that there is significant relationship between knowledge, source of information, age and practice of breast self-examination as all the calculated values were greater than the critical value (table value). The researchers recommend that effort should be sustained in ensuring nursing students continue to update their knowledge and skills of breast self-examination and also educate their colleagues who have poor knowledge of BSE with the view to improving their practice.

Keywords: Knowledge, Practice, Breast, Self-Examination, Female, Nursing Students

1. Introduction

Medical advances have shown that one third of all cancers are preventable and a further one third if diagnosed sufficiently early is potentially curable (Gwarzo, Sabitu and Idris, 2009). Breast cancer is a global health issue and a leading cause of death among women internationally

(Kathmadu 2008). It is responsible for about 12% of death throughout the world (Saadeldin et al, 2013). Breast cancer is distinguished from other types of cancer by the fact that it occurs in a visible organ and can be detected and treated at an early stage. This observation demands that breast cancer control should be of increasing priority in health care programme of developing countries like Nigeria.

Breast self-examination is a risk – free and painless

procedure conducted with the objectives of identifying breast related disorders and cancerous condition. A number of women perform this examination themselves as a screen test for breast cancer. Breast and region around it for lumps, distortions and swellings that might be an indication of breast related disorder or even breast cancer.

The purpose of breast-self-examination is to learn the topography of the breast which will in turn allow one to notice changes in future in order to detect breast lumps or masses. Breast self-examination carried out once monthly, between the 7th and 10th day of the menstrual cycle, go a long way in detecting breast cancer at an early stage of growth when there is low risk of spread, ensuring a better prognosis when treated (Tasci and Usta, 2010). Early diagnosis usually results in treatment before metastasis and signifies a better outcome of management (Okobia, et al, 2006). Performing breast self-exams can help you find breast cancer and detect changes in your breasts early, when they're more likely to be treated successfully. Although not every cancer can be found by regularly examining your breasts, it is an important way to take care of yourself and lower your risk of breast cancer, especially combined with regular physical exams and mammograms (Mary, 2015).

When the level of knowledge and practice of breast self-examination among students of nursing science university of Maiduguri is ascertain, the department of nursing science will use the findings of the study to organize effective programmes that will improve the knowledge of the students and motivate them to practice breast self-examination. Therefore, assessing the knowledge and practice of breast self-examination and the factors affecting breast self-examination among female students is the focus of the study.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Breast cancer is global health issue and a leading cause of death among women internationally. It is responsible for about 12% of death throughout the world (Philip, Harris, and Flaberty 2010). One or two in every twenty five Nigerian women are at risk of breast cancer, but higher risk exists for women who are older than forty five years, than thirty years at birth (WHO 2011). Studies have shown that many female do not carry out breast self-examination. Several reasons like lack of time, lack of self confidence in their ability to perform the techniques correctly, fear of possible findings or discovery of a lump and embarrassment associated with manipulation of the breast have been cited as reasons for not practicing breast self-examination Okobia et al (2006). According to Adesunkanmi, Lawal and Adelusola (2006) about 26% of the respondents do not practice breast self-examination due to forgetfulness 21% do not practice it due to stress while 19% do not practice it due to lack of skills in performing breast self-examination. Rosemary et al (2011), stated that 34% do not practice breast self-examination due to lack of time 20% identified that they do not practice breast self-examination for fear of possible findings or discovery of a lump and 13.2% stated that reason why they don't practice breast self-examination for the embarrassment associated

with manipulation of the breast. A study in Zaria revealed that 57% of the respondents do not practice breast self-examination due to forgetfulness, 13% said it is because of lack of time and 8% believe that there is no problem with their breast. About 20% of the time, breast cancers are found by physical examination rather than by mammography. We recommend that all women routinely perform breast self-exams as part of their overall breast cancer screening strategy (Breastcancer.org, 2016). Also, breast cancer among younger women tends to be more severe, at a more advanced stage and more aggressive than those affecting older women (Gurdal et al, 2012). Young women aged 20-29 with breast cancer have a 72.4 percent mortality rate (Donmez, Dolgun and Yavuz, 2012).

Breast self-examination knowledge and practice is of paramount importance in early detection of signs of breast abnormality hence earlier identification of breast cancer. Breast cancer is the principal cause of cancer deaths among women in Nigeria (Gucuk and Uyeturk, 2013; Gwarzo, Sabitu and Idris 2009). In Nigeria, most of the diagnoses of breast cancer are made when it is too late, thereby leading to several needless and painful deaths of our beloved ones (Owoaje and Balogun, 2005).

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the level of knowledge and practice of breast self-examination among female students of the department of nursing science, university of Maiduguri.

This will be achieved through the following;

1. To determine the knowledge of breast self-examination among students of nursing department
2. To determine the practice of breast self-examination among female students of nursing department.
3. To identify factors that affect breast self-examination among female nursing students in nursing department.

1.3. Hypotheses

The null hypothesis include

1. There is no significant relationship between knowledge and practice of breast self-examination.
2. There is no significant relationship between source of information and practice of breast self-examination.
3. There is no significant relationship between age and knowledge of breast self-examination.

2. Research Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study is a cross-sectional non – experimental descriptive research survey used to find out the knowledge and practices of breast self-examination among female nursing students in university of Maiduguri. Descriptive survey was chosen because it is effective in seeking the views of people about particular issues that concerns them.

2.2. Target Population

The target population of this study was all the female nursing students of the department of nursing science, college of medical science university of Maiduguri. They number 170.

2.3. Sample and Sampling Technique

Using Yemen's formula, sample size of one hundred and nineteen (119) respondents were selected from 100 level to 500 level students in the department of nursing science university of Maiduguri using simple random sampling technique after the use of stratified random sampling which ensured that each strata (class level) was represented in the study.

2.4. Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected by means of self-structured questionnaires. The questions were based on the research questions and consists of question divided into three (4) sections namely.

Section A: consist of socio demographic information. Section B: the level of respondents knowledge on breast cancer and breast self-examination. Section C: the level of practice of breast self-examination. Section D: factors affecting level of practice of breast self-examination.

2.5. Validity/Reliability of Instrument for Data Collection

To ensure the instruments validity, the questionnaire developed was given to the experts who went through it to ensure face and content validity, the calculated validity index was 0.82. To ensure the instrument reliability, questionnaire was pretested in college of medical science university of Maiduguri using 25 questionnaires at one week interval and a reliability coefficient of 0.73 was found using Cronbach's alpha statistics.

2.6. Method of Data Collection

119 self-developed questionnaires were administered to the respondents on one on one basis. The instrument was used to obtain data on the socio-demographic data of the respondents, their level of knowledge, practice of breast self-examination and factors affecting practice of breast self-examination. After completion of the questionnaires, they were all collected for analyses.

2.7. Method of Data Analysis

From the distributed questionnaire, 109 were properly filled, returned and were used for data analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency tables, percentages and Chi-square statistic was used to test the hypotheses. Tables were used in data presentations.

2.8. Ethical Consideration

A letter of introduction was collected from the department

of nursing science which was received and approved by the department in which the study was conducted and the right of the participants was protected by obtaining their informal consent before administration of the questionnaires and also they were assured of strict confidentiality of information obtained.

2.9. Data Analysis and Presentation

The demographic data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentages. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square at level of significance 0.05 other variables were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage. All the data were presented in tables.

3. Data Presentation

3.1. Socio-demographic Data of the Respondents

Table 1. Demographic data of Students.

Variables		Frequency	Percentage(%)
Age in years	15 – 20	10	9.2
	21 – 25	68	62.4
	26 – 30	13	11.9
	31 – 35	7	6.4
	36 – 40	5	4.6
	41 and above	6	5.5
Total		109	100
Marital status	Single	82	75.2
	Married	27	24.8
Total		109	100
Level	100	8	7.3
	200	24	22.0
	300	55	50.5
	400	15	13.8
	500	7	6.4
Total		109	100
Religion	Christian	42	38.5
	Muslim	67	61.5
Total		109	100
Ethnicity	Yoruba	9	8.3
	Hausa	24	22.0
	Igbo	17	15.6
	Kanuri	18	16.5
	Others	41	37.6
Total		109	100

Table 1 above shows the demographic data of the female nursing students of the department of nursing science, university of Maiduguri.

A total of 109 female nursing students participated in the study. Majority of the age students age were belonged to age group 21-25 years which is 68%, 11.9% belong to age group 26-39 years, 9.2% belong to age group 15-20 years, 6.4% belong to age group 31-35 years of age. The table also shows that about 75% of the students are single while 27% of the students are married. Majority of the student are in 300 level with 50.5%, 22.0% are in 200 level 13.8% are in 400 level 4.3% are in one hundred level while 6.4% are in 500 level.

3.2. Knowledge of Breast Self-Examination

Table 2. Knowledge of students about breast self-examination.

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Any family history of breast cancer	Yes	12	11
	No	97	89
Total		109	100
Have you heard about breast cancer	Yes	104	95.4
	No	5	4.6
Total		109	100
Is it common in this environment	Yes	56	51.4
	No	53	48.6
Total		109	100
Can it be detected early	Yes	97	89.0
	No	12	11.0
Total		109	100
Can early detection improve chances	Yes	101	92.7
	No	8	7.3
Total		109	100
Have you heard about BSE	Yes	104	95.4
	No	5	4.6
Total		109	100
How did you heard about it	TV	21	19.3
	Friends	9	8.3
	Health professionals	76	69.7
	Others	3	2.8
Total		109	100
At what age should BSE be done	12 – 17	40	36.7
	18 – 23	45	41.3
	24 and above	24	22.0
Total		109	100
How often should BSE before	Daily	15	13.8
	Weekly	23	21.1
	Monthly yearly	57	52.3
		14	12.8
Total		109	100
How is BSE done	In front of the mirror lying on the bed	19	17.4
	A and B	12	11.0
	Others	76	69.6
		2	1.0
Total		109	100

Table 2 shows that majority do not have any history of breast cancer i.e. 86.2% and about 95.4% have heard about breast cancer 51.4% said breast cancer is common in this environment while 34.9% said it is uncommon in this environment. About 89.0 said it can be detected early while 8.3 said it cannot be detected early. 95.4% have heard about breast self-examination while 2.8% have not heard about it while 1.8% are undecided. About 69.7% of the female nursing students heard about breast self-examination from health professionals while 19.5% heard from the television while 8.3% heard from friends and 2.8% heard from other mediums.

41.3% stated that breast self-examination should be done

from age 18-23 years while 36.7% stated that breast self-examination should be done at 12-17 years and 22.0% stated that breast self-examination should be done from the ages years and above. Majority of the students i.e. 52.3% identified that breast self-examination should be done monthly 21.1% stated that BSE should be done weekly, 13.8% said it should be done yearly. One how breast self-examination should be done, 69.7% said it is done standing in front of the mirror and also lying flat on the bed. 17.4% to said it is done standing in front of the mirror while 11.0% said it is done lying down on the bed while 1.8% identified other means.

3.3. Practice of Breast Self-Examination

Table 3. Students practice of breast self-examination.

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Have you ever practice BSE	Yes	83	76.1
	No	26	23.9
Total		109	100
If yes how often do you perform it	Monthly	57	52.3
	Quarterly	15	13.8
	Yearly	22	20.2
	Can't remember	12	11.0
	Others	3	2.7
Total		109	100
At what age did you start performing BSE	12 – 17	31	28.4
	18 – 23	57	52.3
	1 above 24	21	19.3
Total		109	100
What method of BSE do you use when performing BSE	In front of the mirror lying down on the bed	37	33.9
	A and B	21	19.3
	Others	42	38.5
Total		9	8.3
When was the last time you performed BSE	Last month	52	47.7
	This month	30	27.5
	Last year	21	19.3
	Others	6	5.5
Total		109	100

On the level of practice of breast self-examination, about 76.1% have practice breast self-examination, 23.9% have never practice breast self-examination and 52.3% practice breast self-examination monthly while 20.2% practice it yearly and 13.8% practice unequally and 11.0 cannot remember. The last time they performed breast self-examination. On the age perspective 52.3% started practicing BSE at 18-23 years while 28.4% started at the age of 12-17 and 19.3% stated from 24 years and above. On the method of performing BSE 38.5% perform BSE in front of the mirror and lying down on the bed, 33.7% performed it in front of the mirror, 19.3% performed it lying down on the bed and 8.3% use other method, 47.7% said they last time they performed BSE was last month, 27.5% said they performed BSE this month and 19.3% performed it last year and 5.5% cannot remember the last time.

3.4. Factors That Affect the Practice of Breast Self-Examination

On the factors affecting/hindering the practice of BSE 36.7% stated forgetfulness, 22.0% said they had no time

16.5% identified they had no skills in performing BSE and 11.0% each said stress and fear of unknown identified their reasons for not practicing BSE.

Table 4. Factors affecting breast self-examination.

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
What are the factors that hinder you from practicing BSE	Stress	12	11.0
	No time	24	22.0
	Forgetfulness	40	36.7
	Fear of unknown	12	11.0
	Lack of skills	18	16.5
	Others	3	2.8

3.5. Hypotheses Testing

The null hypothesis include

1. There is no significant relationship between knowledge and practice of breast self-examination.
2. There is no significant relationship between information and level of practice of breast self-examination.
3. There is no significant relationship between age and knowledge of breast self-examination.

Table 5. Null hypothesis – there is no significant relationship between knowledge and practice of breast self-examination.

Variables	practice		Total	Statistics	Remarks
	Yes	No			
Knowledge				FET = 7.244	
Yes	81	23	104	DF = 2	No significant relationship between knowledge and practice of BSE
No	1	2	3	P = 0.17	
Total	83	26	109		

Calculated value = 0.139

Degree of freedom = 2

Level of significance = 0.05

Since the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value (critical value) then you reject null hypothesis. This implies that there is significant relationship between Knowledge and practice of breast self-examination which means that the more knowledge people have about breast self-examination, the greater the level of practice.

Table 6. Null hypothesis 2 there is no significant relationship between information and practice of breast examination.

Variables	Practice					Total	Statistics	Remark
	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly	Can't remember	Other			
TV	15	3	3	3	2	26		
Friends	4	0	2	3	0	9		
Health professional	39	13	18	8	0	78	FET = 16.59 DF = 12 P = 0.32	There is no significant relationship reject null hypothesis
Others	2	0	0	0	1	3		
Total	60	16	23	14	3	109		

P = calculated value = 0.32

DF = degree of freedom = 12

Level of significant = 0.05

Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value (tabulated value) null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between source of information and practice of breast self-examination.

Table 7. Null hypotheses 3. Therefore is no significant relationship between age and knowledge of breast self-examination.

Variable	Knowledge				Total	Statistics	Remark
	Yes	No	Undecided	Total			
Age							
15 – 20	8	2	3	13			
21 – 25	70	6	3	79			
26 – 30	13	0	0	13	FET = 12.40 DF = 9 P = 0.158	No significant relationship between age and knowledge of breast self-examination null hypothesis rejected.	
31 – 35	7	0	0	7			
36 – 40	2	0	0	2			
46 – 50	2	0	0	2			
Total	107	6	6	109			

Calculated value = 0.158

Degree of freedom = 9

Level of significant = 0.05

There is no significant relationship between age and knowledge of breast self-examination. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical value null hypothesis is rejected and conclude that there is significant relationship between age and knowledge of breast self-examination.

4. Discussion of Findings

A total of 109 female nursing students of the Department of Nursing Science College of Medical Sciences, University of Maiduguri were enrolled for the study. Majority fall between the ages of 21-25 years from 68-8% 11.9% falls within the ages of 26-30 years, 9.2% falls within the age of 15-20 years and 1.8% falls within the age of 36-40 and 46-50 years respectively about 75.2% of the students are single while 27% of them are married. Majority of the students 50.5 are in 300 level, 22% of the students in 200 level, while 13.8% are in 400 level, 7.3% are in 100 level and 6.460 of the students are in 500 level.

Knowledge of breast self-examination among the female nursing students

The findings of this study as shown in table 2 indicates that 95.4% (104) of the study population heard about breast cancer and also 95.4% (104) of the female nursing students have also heard about breast self-examination which agrees

with the previous study conducted in Lagos by Rosemary *et al.* (2011) among female medical students in university of Lagos which showed that 93.7% of them have heard about breast cancer and also 93.7% of the students have also heard about breast self-examination. In another research carried out by Kayode, Akande and Osagbemi (2005) among female secondary school teachers showed that 95% of the respondent have heard about breast self-examination. The major source of the information on the knowledge of breast self-examination was gained through health professional with 69.7% and 19% of the formation was gained through the television, 8.3% was through friends while 2.8% was through other means in contrast, previous studies by Kayode,, Akande and Osagbemi (2005) showed that the common source of information was through the television. And also in contrast to previous studies by Saludeent, Akande and Musa (2009) which showed that 37.1% knew about breast self-examination through newspapers However, in relation to other previous research findings most of the respondents have knowledge of breast self-examination and also respondents in health related disciplines are more likely to have more knowledge about breast self-examination.

Practice of breast self-examination among the female nursing students

The findings on table 3 shows that 76.1% of the students

practiced breast self-examination while 23.9% have never practices breast self-examination 52.3% practice it regularly on a monthly basis while, 15% perform it on a quarterly basis 22% perform it on yearly basis and 12% cannot remember the last time they performed breast self-examination. In relation to previous research findings by Gwarzo, Sabitu and Idris (2009) among medical students in Zaria, showed that 57% of the students practiced breast self-examination and 32.1% practice it on a monthly basis, this findings showed that the female students in University of Maiduguri practice breast self-examination regularly, than the previous studies. But in another study by Rosemary et al (2011) showed that 87.5% of the respondent carryout breast self-examination while 26.7% do not perform breast self-examination. This shows that the practice of breast self-examination was acceptable and is encouraging.

Factors that affects breast self-examination among the female Nursing students

The finding in table 4 shows that 36.7% of the respondent stated that the reasons for not practicing breast self-examination was forgetfulness, 22.0% showed time constraint as their reason, 16.3% stated lack of skills in performing breast self-examination, 11.0% fear of unknown and 2.8% show other reasons for not performing breast self-examination.

In relation to the research findings by Okobia et al (2006) and in India by Karima and Ashraf (2004) showed variation from lack of time 52% lack of self confidence in their ability to perform the technique correctly, fear of possible findings as reason for not practicing BSE. Also, in accordance with the findings by (Ahmed et al, 2015) also identified that some reasons for not practicing breast self-examination was forgetfulness, lack of time and belief that there was is nothing wrong with their breast.

5. Summary

The study was conducted on Knowledge and Practice of Breast Self-Examination among female nursing students in university of Maiduguri. And was aimed at determining the knowledge of breast self-examination and the practice of breast self-examination as well as factors that affect the practice of Breast Self-Examination among female nursing students in University of Maiduguri. The study is in non-experimental descriptive research survey which was aimed at seeking the view of people about the knowledge and practice of breast self-examination. The total population was 109 female nursing students used as sample. The data were obtained and analyzed using frequency tables, percentages and Chi- square statistic was used to test the hypotheses. Tables were used in data presentations.

The findings of the research work show that majority of female nursing student have knowledge of breast self-examination and most of the students practice breast self-examination. The major factor affecting the level of practice was forgetfulness and lack of time. Some studies agreed with the findings of the study while others contradict with the findings of the study.

6. Conclusion

Most of the respondents have adequate knowledge about breast self-examination. The health professional were the major source of information and friends were the least. The practice of breast self-examination is positive. Therefore, if the students have knowledge of breast self-examination they can effectively practice breast self-examination.

Recommendation

The researcher recommends the following under the sub-headings:

- Nurses should place posters on bill boards and strategic locations like antenatal clinics and female ward to create awareness about breast self-examination
- Nurses should improve their teaching skills to teach students and clients about breast self-examination.
- Nurses should update their knowledge on current health issues to improve the quality of care and verify ways to facilitate women to come for treatment once they identify abnormalities in their breast.
- The department can also create an awareness and outreach programmes and lectures on breast self-examination.
- The students of nursing department can create an awareness in the university on breast self-examination.
- Students should also ensure that they practice breast self-examination because it is believe that “early diagnosis and treatment reduces the risk of complications.”

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