

Beliefs and behaviour of Malaysia undergraduate female students in a public university toward breast self-examination practice

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Breast cancer is the most common cancer and the second principal cause of cancer deaths among women worldwide, including Malaysia. **METHODS:** A cross-sectional study was carried out among 262 female undergraduate students in University Putra Malaysia using a validated questionnaire which was developed for this study. **RESULTS:** The mean age of respondents was 22 ± 2.3 years. Most of them were single (83.1%), Malay (42.3%) and 20.7% reported having a family history of breast cancer. Eighty-seven (36.7%) claimed they had practiced BSE. Motivation and self-efficacy of the respondents who performed BSE were significantly higher compared with women who did not ($p < 0.05$). There was no association between BSE practice and demographic details ($p < 0.05$). Logistic regression analysis indicated that women who perceived greater motivation (OR=1.089, 95%CI: 1.016-1.168) and had higher confidence of BSE (OR=1.076, 95%CI: 1.028-1.126) were more likely to perform the screening. **CONCLUSIONS:** The findings show that Malaysian young female's perception regarding breast cancer and the practice of BSE is low. Targeted education should be implemented to improve early detection of breast cancer.

Keyword: Breast cancer; Breast self examination; Health belief model; Malaysia