

Breast Cancer

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Knowledge attitude and practices on breast self-examination for breast cancer among women in Tigray region, Northern Ethiopia



(WKLRLSD)

Introduction Global burden of cancer cases and deaths is rising from time to time. Breast cancer is one of the leading cancer related morbidity and deaths in women. The trend of cases and deaths attributed to these cancer types is increasing in developing countries including Ethiopia. Increased awareness and healthy behaviors appeared to reduce the incidence of breast cancer. A little is known about breast cancer knowledge, attitude and behavior in Tigray. The aim of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitude and practices of breast cancer in relation to screening practices to design appropriate awareness campaigns to enhance preventive measures.

Methods A descriptive cross-sectional community based survey was conducted in Kilte-Awlaelo health and demographic surveillance survey sites and Mekelle town. The study was undertaken as part of the wider WHO steps wise survey in the Tigray region. Data were collected in January 2014. A total of 1,433 women in the age group 25-64 years old were included. Face to face interview was employed to gather data from individual respondents. Poor knowledge or no knowledge was defined as woman who has no information regarding the risk factors of breast cancer its consequences and screening of breast cancer or who knows the terms but without any further information. Data were entered to EPI data software and exported to SPSS version 20.0 for descriptive and analytical statistics. Significant statistical association between the outcome and explanatory variables was determined using odds ratio and corresponding 95% confidence interval. The findings were presented using tables and figures.

Results The median age of the study participants was 31 year (ranged from 25-64 year). 739 (52.5%) were married or widowed at the time of the study. Majority (86.7%) of the study participants had no information or only heard the term breast cancer. 86.7% reported they did not have the worry that breast cancer could affect their families. Most (79.4%) did not know how to perform breast self-examination. About 80.5% of the women did not practice breast self-examination. Most (90.2%) did not have breast examination by a health worker. The predictors of practicing self-breast examination after adjusting for potential confounders were being a resident of Kilte Awlaelo 0.57(0.33-0.98), age group 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 had 3.0(1.13-7.93), 3.07(1.14-8.26) 3.03(1.04-9.12) respectively, being government employee, NGO employee, self-employed, housewife and farmer 0.07 (.024-.22), 0.14 (0.03-0.62), 0.17 (0.05-0.55) respectively, knowing nothing at all and knowing only the term 0.11 (0.03-0.39) and 0.92 (0.46-1.84) respectively, who worried sometimes 2.97 (1.61-5.48) and those women who had physical examination of the breast by a health worker 9.70 (4.96-18.98).