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### Awareness and Knowledge of Breast Cancer and Breast Examination amongst Undergraduate Students. Mixed Method Approach

*Sensibilisation et Connaissance du Cancer du Sein et de l'Examen des Seins chez les Étudiants de Premier Cycle. Approche Méthodologique Mixte*

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#### ABSTRACT

**INTRODUCTION:** Breast cancer is the most common cause of cancer death amongst women, and the stage at presentation has been found to be an important prognostic index. The study aims to assess breast cancer awareness, including breast cancer education and knowledge of breast self-examination, among undergraduate students with the hope of improving their knowledge of breast cancer.

**METHODS:** The study used the mixed method approach, to evaluate during breast cancer awareness month. All consenting participants completed a pre-test questionnaire before a breast health seminar, after which the post-test questionnaire was filled out. Consenting participants also had clinical breast examinations performed on them. The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 24.

**RESULTS:** One hundred and thirteen participants filled out the pre-test questionnaire while 127 participants filled out the post-test. There was a significant change following the seminar. About 87.9% of respondents knew about breast cancer but had poor knowledge of the predisposing factors (11.3%). Most participants (94.3%) knew about self-breast examination (SBE), however, only 46% examined themselves in the past with only 21% aware of the correct timing for SBE. Clinical breast exams were conducted on 80 participants, six (7.5%) breast lumps were found and two had excision biopsies with histopathology diagnosis of fibroadenoma.

**CONCLUSION:** Breast education is important, as knowledge about breast cancer is still low, even among undergraduate students. Continuous breast education should be encouraged.

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**Keywords:** Self-Breast Examination, Breast cancer, Undergraduate students, Mixed method approach.

#### RÉSUMÉ

**INTRODUCTION:** Le cancer du sein est la cause la plus fréquente de décès par cancer chez les femmes, et le stade de la maladie au moment de la présentation s'est avéré être un indice pronostique important. L'étude vise à évaluer la sensibilisation au cancer du sein, y compris l'éducation au cancer du sein et la connaissance de l'auto-examen des seins, chez les étudiantes de premier cycle, dans l'espoir d'améliorer leurs connaissances sur le cancer du sein.

**MÉTHODES:** L'étude a utilisé une méthode mixte pour évaluer la sensibilisation au cancer du sein pendant le mois de la sensibilisation au cancer du sein. Toutes les participantes consentantes ont rempli un questionnaire de pré-test avant un séminaire sur la santé des seins, après quoi le questionnaire de post-test a été rempli. Les participantes consentantes ont également subi un examen clinique des seins. Les données ont été analysées à l'aide de la version 24 d'IBM SPSS.

**RÉSULTATS:** Cent treize participantes ont rempli le questionnaire du pré-test et 127 celui du post-test. Des changements significatifs ont été observés à la suite du séminaire. Environ 87,9 % des personnes interrogées connaissaient le cancer du sein, mais avaient une faible connaissance des facteurs prédisposants (11,3 %). La plupart des participantes (94,3 %) connaissaient l'auto-examen des seins, mais seulement 46 % d'entre elles s'étaient déjà examinées et 21 % connaissaient le bon moment pour le faire. Des examens cliniques des seins ont été effectués sur 80 participantes, six (7,5 %) masses mammaires ont été trouvées et deux ont subi des biopsies d'excision avec un diagnostic histopathologique de fibroadénome.

**CONCLUSION:** L'éducation mammaire est importante, car les connaissances sur le cancer du sein sont encore faibles, même chez les étudiantes de premier cycle. Il convient d'encourager la formation continue sur le cancer du sein. WAJM 2023; 40(8): 857–862.

**Mots-clés:** Auto-examen des seins, Cancer du sein, Étudiantes de premier cycle, Méthode mixte.

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Abbreviations: SBE, Self-Breast Examination; NGOs, Non- Governmental Organization.