INFLUENCE OF BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ON THE PRACTICE OF BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION AMONG WOMEN IN OWERRI MUNICIPAL

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ABSTRACT

The issue of breast cancer over time has become worrying as far as women health is concerned. To this end, this study examined the influence of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal. The health belief model was used as the theoretical underpin. The survey research design was used. The population comprised of women in Owerri Municipality 84,444 and the sample size was derived using Wimmer and Dominick sample size calculator. The census principle was adopted. Questionnaire served as the instrument for data collection. Findings revealed that 46% of women have moderate level of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri. Finding further revealed that 45% show indication that the extent breast cancer awareness campaign influences the practice on self-breast examination among women is low. It was recommended that more efforts should be put in place in the campaign messages so as to encourage more exposure and increase the level of awareness on breast cancer campaign and that women should be encouraged to pay close attention to information that will enable them practice self-breast examination.

Keywords: Campaign, breast cancer, women, communication strategies, Owerri.

Introduction

Breast cancer is the commonest of all forms of cancer and one of the major threats to health condition afflicting females all over the world. Report on the cases of breast cancer showed that one out of every eight women in the world stand a chance of having the dreaded disease in her life time (America Cancer Society [ACS], 2015). Although the incidence of breast cancer is increasing all over the world, the rate of increase is higher in developing countries where late detection of the disease is common (World Health Organization [WHO], 2015). Breast cancer is already a well-known health problem in Nigeria with about death in every 25 reported cases (Olalenye, 2013). The continuous rise in the number of breast cancer cases and deaths in Nigeria is worrisome, this ugly situation confirms lakeshore cancer centre prediction that breast cancer cases may rise to 42 million by 2020 in the country (lakeshore Cancer Center 2014; Cancer Epidemiology, 2012).

The primary reason for the increasing mortality rate is due to lack of early detection of the disease (Badar, et al, 2007).This factor is invariably a direct consequence of poor breast cancer awareness observed in most of the developing countries. Information about breast cancer is an essential element, for its early detection, diagnosis and treatment for better outcomes. Since many women can discover breast cancer symptom themselves, it is important that they are well informed, to have the knowledge to notice any breast changes and visit their doctor immediately. Adequate information of breast cancer will equip women with the ability to observer and identify symptoms before the disease starts to spread and seek medical assistance early.

Breast cancer is essentially preventable. Early detection which remains the surest means of breast cancer prevention can be achieved through breast self-examination (BSE), clinical breast examination (CBE) and mammography. The frequency of examination is recommended based on the age of women and the type of examination being recommended. The great improvement in the outcome of breast cancer management is credited largely to early diagnosis which accompanies widespread awareness and uptake of screening.

The increase rate of breast cancer among women is worrisome hence the need for public enlightenment. In view of this, Okorie and Abiodum (2016, p.1) maintained that "media awareness campaigns should be seen as the cornerstone for health communication interventions." According to Jumbo (2019, p.206), "most of the efforts made to reduce breast cancer and improve the health behaviour of women come in form of campaigns, which serve as a mechanism through which messages are communicated from experts in a particular field, to the people who can be helped by the messages." Okorie et al. (2014) averred that the effective use of media awareness campaigns to promote breast cancer care recognizes the actual and potential roles of the mass media in influencing attitudinal change. McPhail (2009) stresses the urgent need of using effective campaign to communicate positive messages and information about breast cancer that could improve developing countries of which Nigeria is part of. Breast cancer campaigns currently have become so-important as a result of the increasingly mortality rate caused by the menacing disease.

In developing countries, such as Nigeria, the majority of women diagnosed with breast cancer hardly survive because their cancer is detected too late. Breast cancer prevention is not simply about educating and empowering women, equipping health workers with the appropriate skills and attitude are also crucial (Okeke, 2018).

The advance stage of BC is the common feature of BC patients in this country, the stage when it is extremely difficult to manage this deadly disease. A survey done by (WHO) in 2016-2017 showed that 22,000 women were affected every year by breast cancer and 17,000 (77%) of them died.

However, this figure is far more less than the real figure, simply because very few case is diagnosed and reported, for many patients die with unnoticed. There may be many reasons behind this, but studies in many

other countries show that poor information, communication, lack of awareness and misbelieve is one of the leading cause of this fastest silent killer.

Against this backdrop, this study sought to examine the influence of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal.

Statement of the Problem

Okorie et al. (2014) observed that breast cancer is a life style disease that affects women in developing and developed countries. The disease has contributed to the deaths of many women in different countries of the world. Among the different cancers that do affect women, BC seems to be in the increase. Due to its increase a number of agencies have launched media awareness campaign in the Nigeria society, some of them include, care organization public Enlightenment (C.O.P.E), Breast Cancer Association of Nigeria (BRECAN)etc. these agencies have pioneered these health communication campaigns across the country, mobilizing women to be aware of breast cancer and practice preventive screening measures.

Despite these campaigns being adopted by media houses, health workers and agencies to educate the public, and minimize the increase of BC patients, there still seems to be an increase and death of patience with breast cancer. Does it mean women are not aware of the breast cancer campaigns? It is as result of this the study sought to examine the influence of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal.

Research Question

1. What is the major channel of breast cancer campaign messages to women in Owerri municipal?
2. What is the level of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal?
3. What is the extent breast cancer awareness campaigns have influence the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal?

Review of Related Literature

Breast Cancer and Media Campaigns

The breast is made up of fatty tissue called adipose tissue (Aronson, et al, 2000). The female breast usually contains glandular tissue than that of the males (Stark, et al, 1992).Breast cancer refers to the erratic growth and proliferation of cells that originate in the breast tissues (Khuwaga & Abu-rezq, 2004).

These breast cells when they grow out of control invade other healthy breast tissue and can travel to the lymph nodes under the arms. Typically the cancer forms in either the lobules or the ducts of the breast (Herndon & Holland, 2019). Lobules are known as the glands that usually produce milk and ducts are the pathways that supply the milk from the glands to the nipple. Cancer can also occur in the fatty tissues or the fibrous connective tissue within the breast. There are two categories that reflect the nature of breast cancer; they are the Nonivasive (in situ) cancer and invasive (infiltrating) cancer (Herndon & Holland, 2019). The Nonivasive (in situ) breast cancer cells remain in a particular location of the breast, without spreading to the surrounding tissue, lobules or ducts, while the invasive (infiltrating) breast cancer cells breaks through normal breast tissue barriers and spread to other parts of the body through the blood stream and humph nodes (ACS, 2019). From normal cells cancer cells are normally formed as a result of modification/mutation of DNA and or RNA. Cancer develops if the

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immune system is not working properly and or the amount of cells produced is too great for the immune system to eliminate (Hirsch, 2010).

In the wake of this health challenge women need information so as to be inform on the danger of breast cancer and the need for them to take proper care of their health. In carrying out campaigns on the issue as breast cancer there are possibly some communication strategies that can play significant role in enhancing the knowledge level of women on breast cancer. Such strategies include interpersonal communication; use of posters, flyers, seminar, workshop the use of the mass media among other communication strategies.

The mass media, which is channel of communication and information, have the ability to penetrate every segment of the society, transmit ideas and new information that would help educate, entertain, create awareness and knowledge about health issues, like breast cancer. Television creates knowledge of breast cancer by scrolling messages on prime time news and programmes. The radio can also introduce musical commercials about breast cancer during peak periods. In addition, a programme could feature a breast cancer patient, which could help educate and create knowledge of the nature, causes and importance of early detection of cancer, as well as seeking medical attention as soon as a tumor is noticed (Okorie, 2013). Although, Okeke (2018) argue that with massive campaigns on breast cancer, women will be equipped with the better knowledge of breast cancer and also the importance of routine checks on the breast but as of now, there have not been enough campaigns on breast cancer. It is expected that the media should be strengthened to help educate the women on the prevention, early detection measures and treatment of breast cancer.

Breast cancer campaigns currently have become important as a result of the increasingly death rate caused by the menacing breast cancer (Jumbo, 2019). McPhail (2009) stresses the urgent need of using effective campaign to bring positive messages and information that could improve developing countries of which Nigeria is part of. According to Peterson et al. (2008), some audiences can be reached with certain kinds of media; thus, when the appropriate medium is used and effective campaign done, the target audiences are allowed to be involved, motivated and their health behaviour improved.

Empirical review

Jumbo (2019) carried out a study on breast cancer self examination and it was revealed that the level of exposure to the campaign on breast self examination was low and that the women mostly access information on breast self examination via radio and face-to-face communication channels. Findings further showed that the campaign on breast self examination was not effective as all the respondents disagreed as to the effectiveness of the campaign. Kalayu et al (2017) carried out a study on breast self examination and it was revealed that the participants (64%) had heard about BSE and 30.25% had good knowledge about BSE and that the mass media were regarded as the most popular source of information about breast cancer. Few of the participants (28.3%) had performed BSE. Lack of knowledge on how to perform BSE was cited as the main reason for not practicing BSE.In the studies conducted by Parkin et al. (2005) to assess breast cancer knowledge among women, the findings indicated that the level of awareness was very low among women. The study by Okobia, et al. (2006) on the knowledge of women on breast cancer it was revealed that there is poor knowledge of breast cancer among Nigerian women. However, the result further shows that majority of the women are willing to participate in the awareness programme and engage in positive health behaviour modification. In the same vein, in the study of Oluwatosin and Oladepo (2006) on rural women of Ibadan, Nigeria they observed that 73.7% of the respondents studied are ignorant of symptoms of breast cancer and the mechanisms for practicing self-examination. In another study by Alam (2006) for women in rural areas in Port Harcourt, and that carried out by Amosu et al. (2011) among rural women in Ipokia Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria revealed similar results. Amannah and Ugwu (2018) did a study on women attitude to breast cancer campaigns it was revealed that the broadcast media

awareness campaigns on breast cancer is still very inadequate coupled with the fact that majority of women are yet to imbibe the habit of engaging in early detection measures.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Health belief model (HBM). "The theory was first propounded in the 1950s by social psychologists, Godfrey Hochbaum, Irwin Rosenstock and Stephen Kegels working in the US Public Health Services so as to understand why people fail to adopt disease prevention strategies or screening tests for the early detection of disease" (Conner & Norman, 1996, as cited in Jumbo, 2019, p.207).The health belief model can be applied to a variety of health behaviours. It is important to stress that interventions using this model is usually targeted to influence the 'perceived threat of disease' variable and hence change the susceptibility/severity balance. According to Amannah and Ugwu, (2018) the theory maintains that people's health behaviours are the makers of what people perceive and think about the threat to themselves, the benefits to be obtained if a suggested action is adopted, the cost of the action, the impact of the external forces such as age, status, education, family etc. other motivating factors and self confidence.

It assumes that people are likely to accept and adopt health interventions if they: Believe they are susceptible to the condition (Perceived susceptibility). Believe the condition has serious consequences (perceived severity). Believe taking necessary action would reduce the chances of susceptibility to the condition or its severity (perceived benefits). Believe costs of taking action (perceived barriers) are outweighed by the benefits. Are exposed to factors that prompt action (e.g. a television and or a reminder from one's physician to get a mammogram) (cue to action. (National Cancer Institute, 2005, p.24). The relevance of this theory to this study is hinged on the fact that women who are prone or susceptible to breast cancer may likely have positive attitudinal disposition toward the information and communication strategies on the campaign on breast cancer because of the perceived benefits from the campaign messages.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted. The population of the study is made up of women from 18 years and above in Owerri Municipal and they are 84, 448 (Owerri Municipal Local Government Area secretariat, 2019). The sample size was derived using Wimmer and Dominick sample size calculator at 95% confidence level and 5% error limit, therefore the sample size was 207. The choice of Owerri Municipal was based on the fact that most of the women might be exposed to the information and communication strategies on breast cancer campaign. The researchers adopted the census principle giving that the sample size is manageable. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection and data was analyzed using percentage method.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section deals with presentation and analysis of data. Out of the 207 copies of questionnaire distributed 198 (96%)was returned valid while 9(4%) was void. Therefore, analysis was done base on the 198 copies of questionnaire.

Table 1: **Respondent response on the major channel of breast cancer campaign messages to women in Owerri municipal (i) use of media messages (ii) interpersonal communication (iii) seminar/workshop (iv) use of posters/flyers (v) brochure (vi) group discussion**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
i, ii & iii	37	19%
iv, v & vi	29	15%
i& ii	20	10%
iii & iv	18	9%
v & vi	16	8%
All the above	78	39%
Total	**198**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2020

Analysis of data from the above table 1 indicated that 39% of respondents confirmed that the major channel of breast cancer campaign messages to women in Owerri municipal are the use of media messages, interpersonal communication, seminar/workshop, use of posters/flyers brochure and group discussion. This implies that all these channels are employed in the campaign on breast cancer among women.

Table 2: Respondent response on the level of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	24	12%
High	36	18%
Moderate	91	46%
Low	29	15%
Very low	18	9%
Total	**198**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2020

Analysis of data from table 2 presented revealed that 46% of women have moderate level of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri municipal. This implies that women in Owerri have moderate level of awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women.

Table3: Respondents response to which breast cancer awareness campaigns influence the practice of breast self-examination

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	15	8%

Great extent	24	12%
Moderate	29	15%
Low extent	90	45%
Very low extent	40	20%
Total	**198**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2020

This question was designed to ascertain the extent of influence by the breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination. Analysis of data from the table 3 revealed that the extent of influence is low as 45% of the respondents confirmed.

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that 39% of respondents confirmed that the major channels of breast cancer campaign messages to women in Owerri municipal are the use of media messages, interpersonal communication, seminar/workshop, use of posters/flyers brochure and group discussion. Base on this finding it is obvious that a lot of channels are being employed in the campaign on breast cancer this could be as a result of everyone needs to be carried along through all these campaigns. This findings is in consonance with Jumbo (2019) finding where it was asserted that women mostly access information on breast self-examination via radio and face-to-face communication channels. Although, Kalayu et al (2017) in their study revealed that among other strategies the mass media were the most common source of information about breast cancer. From the theoretical standpoint women who are susceptible to breast cancer will appreciate more of these communication channels because of the likely or perceived benefits they stand to gain according to the health belief model.

Analysis of finding revealed that 46% of women have moderate level of breast cancer awareness campaigns on the practice of breast self-examination among women in Owerri. This is in line with Parkin et al. (2005) findings that indicated that the level of awareness was very low among women.One might say that the year of the study is way back, however, more recently Amannah and Ugwu (2018) study revealed that the broadcast media awareness campaigns on breast cancer is still very inadequate coupled with the fact that majority of women are yet to imbibe the habit of engaging in early detection measures. Supporting this finding Jumbo (2019) revealed that the level of exposure to the campaign on breast self-examination was low. By implication it means that issue of breast cancer will continue to be a problem because majority of the women lack the knowledge of breast cancer and according to HBM women who are not exposed to factors that prompt action (e.g. a television and or a reminder from one's physician to get a mammogram) will always be at risk of breast cancer.

Finding further revealed that 45% show indication that the extent breast cancer awareness campaign influence the practice on self-breast examination among women is low. Agreeing to this finding Jumbo (2019) in her finding noted that campaign on breast self-examination was not effective as all the respondents disagreed as to the effectiveness of the campaign. In contrary, Kalayu et al (2017) carried out a study on breast self-examination and it was revealed that the participants (64%) had heard about BSE and 30.25% had good knowledge about BSE. However, few of the participants (28.3%) had performed BSE. Poor knowledge on how to perform BSE was pointed as the main reason for not practicing it. Furthermore, the finding of this study resonate well with that of Amannah and Ugwu (2018) where they noted that media awareness campaigns on breast cancer is way far below expectation as a result of that the effectiveness of the campaign will be in doubt and as such practicing self breast examination will be problematic.

Conclusion and Recommendations

It quite obvious that even in the use of these communication campaigns the awareness level of women on breast cancer is nothing to write home about and this explain why the these campaign have low influence in encouraging the practice of self breast examination. Base on this, the researchers conclude therefore, that the issue of breast cancer will continue to be a serious health problem if women do not avail themselves to vital information on how to take good care of their breast. Base on the findings it is recommended that most of these communication channels should be well utilized by campaigners and health workers to get maximum result. More efforts should be put in place in the campaign messages so as to encourage more exposure and increase the level of awareness on breast cancer campaign. Finally, women should be encouraged to pay close attention to information that will enable them practice self breast examination.

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