

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF BREAST CANCER AMONG MEN IN PORT HARCOURT LGA, RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the awareness and comprehension of breast cancer among men residing in the Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study aimed to assess both the awareness and knowledge levels regarding breast cancer in this particular demographic. Employing a survey research approach, the researchers utilized questionnaires as their primary means of data collection. The results indicate that a significant portion, 58.2%, of individuals in the Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State lack awareness and understanding of breast cancer among men. The researcher recommends that the media, medical practitioners, Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other key actors in the community should endeavour to carry out campaigns that can create awareness of breast cancer among men in the society.

INTRODUCTION

In women, breast cancer is a frequent disease; in men, it is quite rare. It is caused by abnormal multiplication of cells in the lobules of breast tissue. Due to the infrequency of male breast cancer cases, most documented studies involve limited patient samples, resulting in incomplete statistical precision regarding the clinical traits of this condition. Nonetheless, the average age at diagnosis in many reported studies typically ranges between 50 and 65 years, spanning from the mid-20s to the early 90s. This age range is approximately a decade older than the average age of onset for breast cancer in women.

According to World Health Organisation (2021) breast cancer differs from certain cancers with infection-related origins, like cervical cancer, which can result from human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. Unlike these cases, breast cancer is not caused by bacterial infections and is not transmissible or contagious. Women tend to have and be aware of this disease because of the size of the breast and the milk generated from women breasts and its possible warning signs can easily be discovered due to this reason. However, many men do not think that they can be victims of breast cancer.

Because men have little breast tissue and they have few lobules in their breast tissues the tendency of having this disease is very low. American Cancer Society revealed that although breast cancers in men are typically smaller upon initial detection compared to those in women, they still don't have to grow significantly to become noticeable near the nipple, the skin over the breast, or the underlying muscles. Despite this, some men may disregard breast lumps, attributing them to infections or other causes, and delay seeking medical attention until the lump has had the opportunity to grow, this regard brought about men's health week against breast cancer in 2020. The programme launched the inaugural male breast cancer awareness campaign was launched on social media to spotlight the presence of breast cancer in men. The campaign aimed to prompt men to monitor their health status, foster supportive environments for men to connect and share experiences, and ultimately enhance awareness and understanding of the significance of breast cancer among men and its associated risks.

Breast cancer is commonly linked to factors such as advancing age, a family history of breast cancer among first-degree relatives (both male and female), specifically with BRCA2 breast cancer, or a history of colon, prostate, or ovarian cancer among family members.

Recognizable symptoms of breast cancer in men encompass the presence of a breast lump, thickening of breast tissue, skin dimpling, alterations in breast or nipple shape, nipple discharge,

localized pain, and swollen lymph nodes in the armpit region. These symptoms underscore the importance of vigilance and early detection in addressing male breast cancer.

Thus, National Cancer Institution (2022) has it that the survival rates for men with breast cancer mirror those of women with equivalent stages of diagnosis. Yet, male breast cancer is frequently detected at later stages, which may diminish the likelihood of successful treatment. Given these considerations, this study aims to investigate the awareness and understanding of breast cancer among men.

Statement of the Problem

Breast cancer among men is a risky and deadly disease among men as it is among women. Perhaps, male gender do not pay attention to it as it is not common among men. World Health Organisation (2021) established that women are high risk fact of this disease and it takes 1% of 100% of men who are victims of this study due to some tissues that are not present in men's breast.

However, the researcher seeks to find out the rate at which people are aware of breast cancer among men and the attention people pay to it to be more knowledgeable about it.

This study will then fill the gap of establishing the level of awareness and knowledge of breast cancer among men and also provide a foundational data for other researchers who might further this research and establish some other gaps in the interest of scholarship.

Objectives of the study

The Objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the level of awareness of breast cancer among men of Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state.
2. Ascertain the knowledge level of Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state about breast cancer among men.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of awareness of breast cancer among men of Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state?
2. What is the knowledge level of Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state about breast cancer among men?

Theoretical Framework and Review of Related literatures

Attention Schema Theory

Attention Schema Theory proposed by Taylor W. Webb and Michael S. A. Graziano in 2015 becomes relevant to this study as it was designed to consider how there are moments when consciousness and focus diverge; The internal images in the brain are never perfect, and there are instances where a representation becomes detached from the object being represented. The ability to be aware of both internal and exterior events is explained in detail by the Attention Schema hypothesis. The brain has the capacity to distribute attention to a multitude of information sources, including both internal and external sensory data as well as emotional and cognitive signals. If consciousness is an attention representation, then the information domains that attention covers should also be included in this representation. Moreover, the theory suggests that if consciousness serves as the internal representation of attention, aiding in attentional control, then even in the absence of consciousness, attention should still be feasible but might exhibit deficiencies in control. In essence, awareness functions as a model of attention.

Applied to this study, the theory suggests that without awareness, attention should still be possible. It thus helps to ascertain the relationship with respondents' knowledge and awareness. It also help to figure out the level of attention people give breast cancer among men due to their awareness of breast cancer among men.

Literature have documented the cases of breast cancer among men, the problems of male and female breast cancer one of these studies is that of Avanzo & Vecchia (1995) the researchers carried out a study on the Risk factors associated with a case-control research. The study revealed that socio-economic factors and family history mirror well-established risk factors for female breast cancer. Consequently, the researchers concluded that male and female breast cancers likely share certain underlying causal factors.

Fentiman (2009) carried out In-depth interviews of male breast cancer patients in a study entitled 'Male Breast Cancer: A Review'. The study identified seven primary areas of concern: tardiness in diagnosis, emotional distress, societal judgment, self-perception, underlying causes, and insufficiency in both informational and emotional assistance.

In a national survey referenced in Fentiman (2009), researchers discovered that although there was a low occurrence of clinical degrees of tension and sadness—6% and 1%, respectively—23% of participants reported experiencing discomfort related to their cancer. The fact that the subjects were self-selected may have contributed to the low levels of psychological illness. Donovan et al., mentioned in Fentiman (2009) presented were four overarching themes of experience among male breast cancer patients: grappling with understanding the diagnosis, confronting challenges to masculinity, facing the stigma associated with the diagnosis, and encountering obstacles in navigating interactions with healthcare institutions. National guidelines are obviously needed for males who have been diagnosed with breast cancer, both in terms of information and assistance.

In the same vein, Muna (2010) clearly pointed out that while it is uncommon in men, breast cancer is more common in women. This is due to the lack of awareness in society that males can potentially get breast cancer as women and this factor contributes to late diagnoses in men which may lead to end stage resulting to complete removal of the cancerous part, this may also lead to death if no proper attention is given to the patient. Healthcare professionals should increase awareness among men about the potential occurrence of breast cancer and encourage them to discuss it with their family members. It's crucial to educate them about the associated risk factors and preventive measures, such as simple screening methods like breast self-examination. This practice can help to detect breast cancer earlier in men and can be easily conducted independently.

Saygin et'al (2023) the researchers in their study contend that men are typically less likely than women to develop breast cancer. males's awareness of breast cancer is impacted by the dominant cultural belief that breast cancer is only associated with women, as well as the fact that breast cancer is comparatively uncommon in males. The study determined the awareness level of cancer in men and a guide for future studies on the need to improving social awareness among men and not just women as their case are already known. An assessment of the association between gender and awareness demonstrated that women exhibited greater knowledge regarding breast cancer compared to men. Enhancing public awareness of this matter can facilitate earlier diagnosis among men, potentially at less advanced stages, leading to more effective treatment responses and improved survival rates.

Jonathan et al. (2011) noted that male breast carcinoma is an uncommon occurrence, and there is limited availability of data from therapeutic trials or epidemiological studies unique to male breast cancer. As such, research on breast cancer in women is the main information source of on breast cancer in men, which may inaccurately portray the contributing factors to the condition. This report unravel the need for awareness and knowledge for male gender on their health and early detection.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted through the survey research method aimed at measuring the awareness and knowledge level of breast cancer among men in Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state. In this study, a sample size of 400 was selected from a total population of 3,637,000 residing in the local government area. The researchers employed the cluster sampling technique for sampling.

$$S = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where S= Sample size

N= Population of study

e= Margin of error which is put as 0.05 for this study.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Respondents' awareness of Breast Cancer among men

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Strongly agree	76	20.1%
Agree	44	11.6%
Undecided	38	10.1%
Disagree	108	28.6%
Strongly Disagree	112	29.6%
Total	378	100.0%

The table above indicates that 112 respondents with 29% and 108 respondents with 28.6% which is equivalent to 58.2% of the respondents are not aware of breast cancer among men. 76 respondents with 20.1% and 44 respondents with 11.6% equivalent to 31.7% are aware of breast cancer among men while 38 respondents' with 10.1% are indecisive.

This implies that the majority of the respondents don't have awareness of breast cancer among men while smaller percentage of the respondents are aware of this disease among men and smallest percentage of respondents cannot decided their awareness or might have forgotten what the diseases is all about.

Table 2: Extents to which respondents are aware of Breast Cancer among men

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Very High extent	55	14.6%
High extent	72	19.0%
Can't tell	41	10.8%
Low extent	99	26.2%
Very low extent	111	29.4%
Total	378	100.0%

The data in table 2 revealed that 111 (29.4%) respondents are aware of breast cancer among men at a very low extent, 99(26.2%) respondents are aware of breast cancer at a low extent, 72(19.0%) respondents are aware of the disease at an high extent, 55(14.6%) are aware of the disease at a very high extent while 41(10.8%) respondents can't tell.

The implication of the data above is that the extent at which respondents are not fully aware of breast cancer among men dominates the responses as it takes 55.6% of the entire 100% of responses. This means that larger percentage of respondents has low awareness level of breast cancer among men is higher than those who are fully aware of breast cancer among men.

Table 3: Respondents' knowledge of Breast Cancer among men

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Yes	105	27.8%
No	231	61.1%
Can't say	42	11.1%
Total	378	100.0%

The table above shows the frequency of knowledge of respondents about breast cancer among men. The data in the table implies that majority (61%) of the respondents do not have knowledge of breast cancer among men.

Discussion of Findings

The study's conclusions showed that 58.2% of residents in Rivers state's Port Harcourt local government area are unaware that males may develop breast cancer. The findings further revealed that the majority respondents' level of awareness is not to a high extent and the percentage of the knowledge level of the respondents about breast cancer among men is very low.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In relation to Taylor W. and Michael S. proposal in Attention Schema theory, the awareness of people makes the attention giving to breast cancer among me very low. From the findings most of the residence of Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers state are not aware of the disease of breast cancer among men, most of them have the perception that men can be affected by breast cancer. And this reduced the attention they give to breast cancer among men, however this has resulted to low level of knowledge they have about this dangerous disease.

From the findings above, the researcher thereby recommend that the media, medical practitioners, Non governmental organisations and other key actors in the community should endeavour to carry out campaigns that can create awareness of breast cancer among men in the society. Seminars should also be organised for people to be knowledgeable of breast cancer among men, the effects and preventive measures of this disease in the society.

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