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Breast cancer mammography screening in Jordan: Limitations and future recommendations

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Introduction: Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in Jordan. Current efforts are focused on annual campaigns aimed at increasing awareness about breast cancer and encouraging women to conduct mammogram screening. In the absence of regular systematic screening for breast cancer in Jordan, there is a need to evaluate current mammography screening uptake and its predictors, assess women's knowledge and attitudes towards breast cancer and screening mammograms and to identify barriers to this preventive service.

Methods: This cross-sectional study was conducted in six governorates in Jordan through face-to-face interviews on a random sample of women aged 40 to 69 years.

Study questionnaire: A structured questionnaire was designed to cover the study objectives using the Health Belief Model. It was tested and piloted in study areas.

Results: A total of 507 participants with mean age of 46.8 ± 7.8 years were interviewed. There was low participation rate in early detection of breast cancer practices. Breast self-examination, doctor examination and periodic mammography screening were reported by 34.9%, 16.8% and 8.6% of study participants, respectively. Additionally 3.8% underwent breast cancer screening at least once but not periodically, while 87.6% had never undergone mammography screening. Reported reasons for conducting the screening were: perceived benefit (50%); family history of breast cancer (23.1%); perceived severity (21.2%); and advice from friend or family member (5.8%). City residents have shown higher probability of undergoing mammogram than those who live in towns or villages. Results revealed negative perceptions and limited knowledge of study participants on breast cancer and breast cancer screening. The most commonly reported barriers for women who never underwent screening were: fear of results (63.8%); no support from surrounding environment (59.7); cost of the test (53.4%); and religious belief, i.e. Qadaa Wa Qadar (51.1%).

Conclusions and Recommendations: In the absence of regular systematic screening for breast cancer in Jordan, the uptake of this preventive service is very low. It is essential for the country of Jordan to work on applying regular systematic mammography screening for breast cancer. Additionally, there is a need for improvement in the current health promotion programmes targeting breast cancer screening. Other areas that could be targeted in future initiatives in this field include access to screening in rural areas and removal of current barriers.

Biography

Abu-Helalah completed his medical degree from Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) 2001. He moved in 2002 to the United Kingdom (UK) where completed a master degree in Public Health (MPH) from the University of Dundee in 2004 and a PhD in epidemiology and preventive medicine from the University of London in 2009. While he was in the UK, he worked as a Research Fellow in epidemiology and preventive medicine at the St Bartholomew's Hospital, London-UK, in 2007/2008. In 2009, he joined King Hussein Cancer Center in Jordan as a Senior Officer for the cancer control program. In 2011, he joined the National Guard Health affairs as an Assistant Professor of Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine. In February 2012, he returned to work in Jordan at the Faculty of Medicine, Mutah University. He was selected in 2013 as the regional director for Middle East and North Africa for the Global Center for Public Health and Disease Control, Ohio, USA. He also works as a consultant and technical expert for several regional and international organizations. Abu-Helalah has special expertise and interest in chronic diseases control and prevention particularly cancer, diabetes, thyroid disorders, cardiovascular diseases, and smoking cessation. This is in addition to his experience in medical research and in applying evidence based medicine in clinical practice. He has conducted more than ten workshops in the above fields over the last two years and he has had important publications in these fields in peer-reviewed journals.

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