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Illiteracy and Breast Cancer Screening Utilization: A Case Study of Saudi Women over 60 Years of Age

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Objective: Illiteracy is common among Saudi women over 60 years of age. The aim of this study was to evaluate whether illiteracy has an impact on breast cancer screening utilization among Saudi women over 60 years of age.

Methods: Analysis was performed for women who were involved in The Health Care of The Saudi Elderly National Study which undertaken between 2012-2013. We compared the levels of breast cancer screening utilization between illiterate and non-illiterate women over 60 years of age. Logistic regression (multivariate and univariate) and adjusted probability were calculated.

Results: Of 2183 women involved in the analysis, 1751 were illiterate and 432 were not illiterate, majority were between of 60 to 65 years (41%). Results of the multivariate logistic regression model showed a statistical significant effect of illiteracy on the utilization of breast cancer screening (OR=0.54, 95% CI: 0.30- 0.97, p= 0.038). According to our analysis, the adjusted probability of Saudi women over 60 years of age to get clinical breast examination and mammography is 0.08 for the illiterate and 0.37 for not illiterate women.

Conclusion: Illiteracy among Saudi women over 60 years of age may contribute considerably to the low level of breast cancer screening utilization. These findings could help guide effective interventions and an attention to the needs of this cohort of the Saudi society.

Biography

Shareef is a MBBS, MPH and a global surgery advocate. He completed two years of residency in general surgery before taking last year off to pursue a Master of Public Health (MPH) from Johns Hopkins University, concentrating in epidemiology and health care management. Since June 2014 he is working as a research assistant at the Center of Surgical Trials and Outcomes Research (CSTOR) where he became interested in cancer epidemiology and quality improvement in developing countries. His leadership experience includes serving as a Public Health Coalition Events Coordinator and Middle East Society Outreach coordinator at the School of Public Health (JHSPH). Shareef co-authored multiple research manuscripts primarily in the fields of cancer epidemiology and awareness in low and middle income countries.

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