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Factors militating against the practice of breast cancer early detection among nuns in anambra State Nigeria

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Background: Breast cancer has been popularly defined as a malignant tumor of the brain cells. This paper assessed the factors militating against the practice breast cancer among nuns in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Methods: To guide the study, five research questions were raised which includes social demographic data. Adopted for the study was Health belief model. Cross-sectional descriptive survey was the design used. Power Analysis was used to draw a sample of 324 nuns from an estimated population of 794 of them living in communities located in Anambra State, Nigeria through stratified, proportionate, and convenient sampling techniques. Data were collected by administration of a set of seventeen-item self-developed questionnaire on knowledge of preventive measures towards breast cancer. Personal contact and direct instrument administration to the respondents with the assistance of three trained preceptors was used for data collection was, during the respondents' general regional meetings. Analysis of the data obtained were done descriptively using frequencies and percentages. Unpaired t-test was used to compare the responses of the two groups.

Results: The reasons for the respondents' inability to engage themselves with breast cancer early detection practices abound and vary. As many as 148 (45.7%) nuns were not aware of where to obtain the services. Of these number, 31 (64.6%) were the contemplatives while 117 (42.4%) were from the active nuns. Seventy-three (22.5%) avoided the detective practices because they were afraid that lump may be detected, and as such preferred to live in ignorance, while 65 (20.1%) were due to financial handicaps which affect more of the contemplatives (27.1%) than the actives (18.8%). There was no significant difference between the two groups of respondents ($P > 0.05$).

Conclusion: The result of the study revealed that the nuns in Anambra State, have a number of militating factors against their practice of breast cancer early detection behaviors. Ignorance was a major factor as the respondents claimed being unaware of where to obtain the services. Fear of lump detection, forgetfulness, time, finance, culture and so on were the factors militating against the respondents' early detection practices. It appears that a higher percentage of the contemplatives are victims of the above militating factors. The reason could be attributed to the respondents' high and extreme degree of decency/humility.

Recommendation: In order that the problems of the militating factors be properly addressed, and as a matter of urgency, there should be evidence based policies backed by appropriate legislation mandating sisters to be committed to breast cancer education programs, with adequate funding. There should be policy guidelines which should contain plans for training and retraining of all health workers with the aim of disseminating knowledge and skills for the best practice. This suggests that all identified militating factors should be addressed objectively, and this topic co-opted into the course on breast cancer/women health, so as to allay any fear and bias that bewitch some nuns. Similar study should be conducted using a larger sample which should include all age brackets. Anambra State government should be actively involve.

Biography

Madu, Laurette Philomena Nkem, a State Registered Nurse and Midwife, majored also in the following specialty areas: Nursing Education (1st degree); M.Sc. (Nursing); M.Ed. & Ph. D (Educational Administration & Supervision); as well as a certified MBTI Practitioner. She headed the renowned School of Nursing Ihiala for 15 years after many years of Clinical Nursing, and some years of classroom teaching. Madu, Laurette served in Our Lady of Lourdes Governing Board for 15yrs, and made outstanding contributions. Served as a member-Standards and accreditation Committee, Nursing and Midwifery Council of Nigeria. She is highly interested in research work.

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