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Knowledge of breast cancer and its early detection measures among rural women in Vhembe district of Limpopo province, South Africa

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Abstract

Purpose of this study was to assess level of knowledge, beliefs and early detection measures of breast cancer among rural women in Vhembe district of Limpopo province, South Africa. Late presentations of breast cancer cases have also been consistent for more than two decades despite national screening campaigns put to place by the South African National Department of Health. A non-experimental, quantitative, exploratory, descriptive design was used to obtain data by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The population of this study consisted of all women with breast cancer who consulted the sampled clinics in the rural areas of Vhembe district. A non-probability convenient sampling of 716 women who consulted the sampled clinics at the time of data collections were recruited to participate in this study.

A questionnaire with open and close ended questions was used to collect data in this study. The mean score of knowledge of breast cancer was 54.3 SD 5.4 (range of scores obtainable was 27–79), while the mean score for knowledge of early detection of breast cancer was 22.6 SD 2.4 (range of scores obtainable was 14–37). The leading source of information about breast cancer was elders of the village, neighbors and friends" and (15.4%) acknowledged this source, while only (4.4%) respondents acknowledged health workers as source. Only (12.2%) claimed to have heard about breast self- examination (BSE) however, and the leading source of information about BSE was nurses and doctors. This study revealed that respondents lacked knowledge of vital issues about breast cancer and early detection measures. It also revealed that health workers were not forthcoming with information to the public thereby constituting a challenge to community health nurses and other health workers, to provide vital information to the public.

Biography

Lizzy Mangena-Netshikweta has completed her PhD at the age of 40 years from the University Of South Africa, and postdoctoral studies from the University of Johannesburg. She is Associate Professor of Nursing. She has published more than 25 articles in accredited and reputed journals and has been serving a reviewer several universities.

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