



CODEN [USA]: IAJPBB

ISSN : 2349-7750

**INDO AMERICAN JOURNAL OF  
PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES**

SJIF Impact Factor: 7.187

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5361344>Available online at: <http://www.iajps.com>

Research Article

**ASSESS THE KNOWLEDGE REGARDING BREAST SELF-  
EXAMINATION AMONG NURSES OF MULTAN**<sup>1</sup>Shahnaz Ashiq, <sup>2</sup>Robina Kousar, <sup>3</sup>Tahira Shaheen<sup>1</sup>Charge Nurse, Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology, Multan.,Email: [shahnazashiq27@gmail.com](mailto:shahnazashiq27@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>Charge Nurse, District Headquarters Hospital, Okara.,Email: [rubinaasifwife@gmail.com](mailto:rubinaasifwife@gmail.com), <sup>3</sup>Nursing Instructor, Post Graduate College of Nursing  
Punjab, Lahore., Email: [ushnahumna@gmail.com](mailto:ushnahumna@gmail.com)**Article Received:** June 2021**Accepted:** July 2021**Published:** August 2021**Abstract:****Background:** Breast self-examination is a safe, simple, economical and easy to perform noninvasive painless technique requiring no special expertise; it is efficient and has a positive diagnostic value for breast cancer.**Aim of the Study:** The study is aimed to assess the level of breast self-exam (BSE) knowledge among nursing students in Multan.**Subjects and methods:** Descriptive, cross sectional study for random sampling of 100 female nursing students was conducted at College of Nursing Nishtar Hospital Multan. Validity and pilot study was checked.**Results:** Study results have shown that 15.5% of the respondents had good overall knowledge towards BSE, The major source of information about BSE (57.6 %) was mass media in the study, 75.3% of participants had positive attitude towards BSE, and 4.1% practice BSE always every month. There was a significant difference between age and academic level towards Knowledge of BSE.**Conclusion and recommendation:** Most female nursing students had poor knowledge about BSE and did not perform BSE. Mass Media is an important source of information about BSE to create awareness among the community.**Keywords:** breast cancer, breast self-exam, nursing female students.**Corresponding author:****Shahnaz Ashiq,**

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Please cite this article in press Shahnaz Ashiq et al, Assess *The Knowledge Regarding Breast Self-Examination Among Nurses Of Multan.*, Indo Am. J. P. Sci, 2021; 08(8).

**INTRODUCTION:**

BSE is one of the most convenient procedures that could be performed for rapid and early detection of a breast lump. There are diverse manifestations of a breast pathology e.g. benign, fibrotic, neoplastic (cancer) inflammatory, atrophic and so on. However, in the world malignant neoplasm (breast cancer) is the most prevalent and fatal cancer in women, with a burden of over 2 million in the last decade. [1] The prevalence of breast disease can be checked with early detection of the lump by breast self-examination. However, the awareness of breast self-examination in women is low. So far, governmental and non-governmental organizations like American Society of Clinical Oncology, European Cancer Organization, International Union against Cancer and the Global Health Council have taken pronged steps to spread awareness of the mounting cancer burden in the

developing world. There still exists a huge gap that must be filled by early prevention, rapid detection, treatment and palliative care.

This study was conducted at College of Nursing Nishtar Hospital, Multan. A random sample size of 200 nursing students was chosen during January 2020 to June 2020 after formal approval from the ethical board of the concerned teaching institution. Informed consent taken from each participant. Privacy and confidentiality was ensured at every step.

**Inclusion criteria:**

All under graduate female students above first year of college.

**Exclusion criteria:**

Students who did not want to participate.

**Table 1** Socio-demographic data of nursing students of Multan

Variables	category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	2-30	170	85.
	31-40	30	15
Year of study	Second year	70	35
	Third year	65	32.5
	Fourth year and above	65	32.5
Marital status	Single	185	92.5
	Married	15	7.5
Religion	Islam	180	90
	Christianity	17	8.5
	Hindu	2	1
	Other	1	0.5
Class	Upper	12	6
	Upper Middle	98	49
	Middle	70	35
	Lower Middle	30	15
Resident	Rural	170	85
	Urban	30	15
Do any of your family members have history of breast disease?	Yes	27	13.5
	No	173	86.5

**Table 2** Knowledge regarding BSE of nursing students of Multan

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Did you heard about breast self-examination?	Yes	128	64
	No	72	36
If your answer is yes?	Electronic Media	42	21
What is your source of information	Health professionals	98	49
	Books	22	11
	Lectures	54	27
	Other	26	13
Should we perform BSE?	Yes	62	31
	No	138	69
Can BSE help for early detection of breast disease lump?	Yes	154	77
	No	46	23
At what age do you think that breast self-examination has to be begun	Yes	66	33
	No	134	67
How often should you perform BSE?	Yes	79	39.5
	No	121	60.5
When should a woman with regular menstruations do BSE?	Yes	60	30
	No	140	70
What will be the correct position of body while performing BSE	Yes	172	86
	No	28	14
What are the techniques of regular breast self-examination	Yes	112	56
	No	88	44
Position of your hand during inspection	Yes	90	45
What are the hand placements that you use during palpation of the breast	Yes	165	55
	No	135	45
What are the following characteristics of a breast lump are least suspected of malignancy?	Yes	58	29
	No	142	71
How many steps do you know for performing BSE	Yes	36	18
	No	164	82

As illustrated in (Table 2), the majority 128 (64%) female nursing students heard about breast self-examination and their major source of information were from Health professionals 98 (49%). Regarding to their knowledge about benefits of early detection 154 (77%) of the study subject knew that early detection of breast disease can be increased by BSE. Of the study subjects involved in this study (200), only 66 (33%) and 79 (39.5%) knew that at what age of breast self-examination has to be begun and How often a women perform BSE respectively. According to participant response in this study 172(86%), 112(56%) and 110(55%) of female nurse students know the correct position, techniques and pattern of BSE respectively. Regarding to their knowledge the participated in this study only 31618%) of female nurse students know the correct step of BSE.

Breast self-examination is one of the convenient procedures that could be made for early detection of a breast disease. In the current study the overall knowledge of female undergraduate students with regard to BSE is found to be 167 (55.7%). This finding is much lower than study conducted in United Arab Emirates (96.1%),<sup>4</sup> Nigeria (85.1%),<sup>5</sup> Malaysia (81.9%),<sup>6</sup> and Ghana (75%).<sup>7</sup> The possible difference could be due to the effort of some organization like United Arab Emirates Cancer Association who is doing toward improving awareness of BSE. Similarly, another difference could be due to the effect of their source of information coverage and learning setup and also could be due to the fact that more concern is given to communicable diseases than the non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Similarly, the current finding is also much lower than the study conducted in Ethiopia (Haramaya) University (87.3%).<sup>8</sup> in our context this difference could be related with sample size difference and the information of health education about BSE was not uniform in the country and still due to the reality that NCDs were neglected.

### CONCLUSION:

Overall the knowledge, attitude and practice of nursing students of Multan inadequate related to breast self-examination.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the finding of the study the following recommendations are drafted:

Our study found that the reason why female nursing students were not able to perform breast self-exam was that none of them had been formally taught about the steps of this procedure. In this context we recommend state organizations and officials of the institutes to conduct live sessions and workshops and revise the

curriculum so that every student should become well versed with the protocols and lead the community in a positive way. The role of media information technology is pivotal in this regard. Therefore, we recommend the media to host e-health and telemedicine programs to increase the knowledge of students in particular and the population in general.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

The authors are extremely humbled to the college for granting permission and technical assistance for conducting this research.

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