Original Article

Knowledge Attitude and Performance of Female Students of Medical versus Nonmedical Sciences toward Breast Self-examination

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Abstract

Introduction: Breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in Women, which, if diagnosed at an early stage, can be treated. Breast self-examination is a simple and inexpensive way to screen for breast cancer. Students, especially medical students, as the educated class of the community, are expected to be knowledgeable with good attitudes and performance in this field. The purpose of this study was to compare the knowledge, attitude and performance of female Students of medical versus nonmedical Sciences toward Breast Self-examination in the city of Sirjan.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, 228 medical students and 240 nonmedical students were enrolled. A researcher-made survey questionnaire was used for data collection. Content validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by 10 nursing and midwifery experts, and its reliability was assessed by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Data were analyzed using SPSS software.

Results: The mean breast self-examination knowledge scores for medical students and nonmedical students were 34 ± 3.81 and 32.84 ± 4.40, respectively. The mean score of attitude toward breast self-examination was 68.11 ± 8.69 for medical students and 63.54 ± 8.90 for nonmedical students. Finally, the mean score of performance of breast self-examination was 23.88 ± 6.37 for medical students versus 22.89 ± 7.45 for nonmedical students. There was a significant difference in knowledge and attitude between medical and nonmedical students (P < 0.05), but the difference in performance was not significant (P > 0.05).

Conclusion: Knowledge scores of medical and nonmedical students were moderate, and attitude scores of both groups were high, although medical students’ scores were significantly higher than those of nonmedical students. Nonetheless, both groups had poor performance of breast self-examination. This indicates that efforts must be made on the part of the education system to promote awareness, attitude and performance of breast self-examination through effective and new methods.

Keywords: Breast Cancer, Breast Self-examination, Knowledge, Attitude, Performance