ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Iranian Quarterly Journal of Breast Disease 2017; 10(3):41.

The Impact of Psychosocial Factors in the Delay in Seeking Medical Treatment among Women with Breast Cancer Symptoms: An Appraisal of Health Belief Model

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Abstract

Introduction: One of the most important factors for the successful treatment and reduction of death in women with breast cancer symptoms is time for treatment and decision making by patients. One of the exploratory models in search of a cure for women with breast cancer symptoms is the health belief model (HBM). The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between components of the HBM and delays in seeking treatment in women with breast cancer symptoms.

Methods: The current study was a descriptive and cross-sectional study. Data were collected from 70 female patients with verified symptoms of breast cancer presenting to two different medical centers (Razi Hospital and Besat Medical Clinic) in Rasht, Iran. They were selected using convenience sampling method. The measuring tool for data were questionnaire for delays in seeking treatment, health belief model scale (HBMS), and knowledge of breast cancer (KBC).

Results: Significant differences was observed between women with less or more than 3 months delay in seeking treatment in late phase of the evaluation of symptoms, particularly in terms of components of the cues to action ($p = 0.030$) and knowledge of breast cancer ($p = 0.041$); perceived vulnerability ($p = 0.007$) and perceived barriers ($p = 0.048$) for treatment in illness delay phase, and perceived barriers for treatment components ($p = 0.045$), perceived benefits for treatment ($p = 0.049$), and perceived self–efficacy ($p = 0.002$) in behavior delay phase.

Conclusion: Components of the HBM had a relatively good predictability in elucidating the etiology of treatment seeking delay in women with symptoms of breast cancer.

Keywords: Breast Cancer, Help-Seeking Delay, Health Belief Model.

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DOR: 20.1001.1.17359406.1396.10.3.4.7]