

KNOWLEDGE AND UTILIZATION OF ROUTINE ANNUAL MAMMOGRAPHY AMONG WOMEN ATTENDING OUT-PATIENT CLINIC AT THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OUTREACH HOSPITAL OKOTA LAGOS, NIGERIA

---

Okonkwo, Uchenna Teresa

Department of Sociology/Anthropology

University of Nigeria, Nsukka

E-Mail: [uchenna.okonkwo@unn.edu.ng](mailto:uchenna.okonkwo@unn.edu.ng)

**Abstract:** The study examined the knowledge and utilization of routine annual mammography among women attending out-patient clinic at Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota Lagos, Nigeria. The quantitative method of data gathering was utilized for the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. 180 questionnaires were distributed using the availability sampling technique. The findings of the study showed that women (86%) attending the out-patient clinic at the Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota Lagos, Nigerian were highly knowledgeable about the importance of routine annual mammography. They revealed that routine annual mammography is very crucial to the early detection of breast cancer. The women's higher level of knowledge on the importance of routine annual mammography did not translate to their utilization of the routine breast cancer detection examination. They gave three (3) major reasons why the poor utilization of the routine examination existed – (i) fear of side effects, (ii) fear of eventually contracting the illness, and (iii) financial constraint. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that awareness on the importance of routine annual mammography to detect early breast cancer in order to give prompt treatment should be created through seminars, use of mass media, conferences etc. these ways of awareness raising should also target drinking the perceptions they have impeding their utilization of routine annual mammography.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, Utilization, Routine, Annual, Mammography

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Okonkwo, Uchenna Teresa (2017), knowledge and Utilization of Routine Annual Mammography among Women Attending Out-Patient Clinic at the Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota Lagos, Nigeria. *J. of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, Vol. 9, Number 2, Pp. 76-83.

---

## INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is by far the most frequent cancer of women (Parkin, Bray, Ferlay & Pisani, 2002). Mortality from breast cancer is preventable if the disease can be diagnosed early (Anderson, Yip, Smith, Shyyan, Sener, Eniu, Carlson, Azavedo & Harford, 2008). Mammography is the mainstay of screening for breast cancer. Although not a new screening method, it is yet to be widely available especially in the low-resource countries including Nigeria (Okobia, Bunker, Okonofua & Osime, 2006). The primary factors that increase risk of breast cancer in women include certain inherited genetic mutations, a personal or family history of breast cancer, and biopsy-confirmed hyperplasia (Lee, E., Ahn, You, Lee, D., Han, Choe & Noh, 2004). Other factors that increase breast cancer risks include a long menstrual history, obesity after menopause, recent use of oral contraceptives, postmenopausal hormone therapy, nulliparity or consumption of one or more alcoholic beverages per day (Lee, Ahn, You et al., 2004). The level of awareness and utilization of mammography in Nigeria, as in most other developing countries is quite poor (Okobia, Bunker, Okonofua & Osime, 2006). Mammography is the only breast screening procedure for which empirical evidence exists to have significantly reduced breast carcinoma mortality by about 63% (Tabar, Vitak, Chen, Yen, Duffy & Smith, 2001). Cancer detection investigations therefore play a pivotal role in reducing breast cancer related mortalities (Tang, Solomon & McCracken, 2000). Therefore, the American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends women 40years and above should have a mammogram every year. However, there are still challenges concerning its use such as costs, false positivity, pain during the procedure and risk of radiation exposure (Fletcher & Elmore, 2003).

Despite the bulk of literature available on the knowledge, attitudes and utilization of mammography among Nigerian women, there is still a lacuna in this area especially hospital-based study in Nigeria. The purpose of this

study was therefore to assess the knowledge and utilization of routine annual mammography among women attending out-patient clinic at the Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota Lagos, Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The material used in this article was derived from an empirical study conducted between 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2017 - 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2017. The study was conducted in a selected hospital in Lagos State - Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota, Lagos among women attending out-patient clinic. This hospital was selected because the management of the hospital usually organize mammography examination annually. The questionnaire (quantitative instrument) was distributed to one hundred and eighty (180) respondents using the availability sampling technique. Women between the ages of 40-69 years were enrolled for this study. Women between this age range were enrolled for the study because they are considered the group highly susceptible to breast cancer. The questionnaires was other-administered by two (2) trained research assistants who are also qualified nurses working as full-time medical personnels at the study area - Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota Lagos, Nigeria. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for analysis of data.

## **RESULTS**

A majority of the respondents were over 54 years of age (58%). A majority of the respondents were active in the labour market and not self employed (91%), had a high level (first degree and above) of education (64%) and high family income (more than a ninety thousand naira) (62%). More than half of the respondents reported four pregnancies or more (56%) and over 60% had attended the clinic for more than two years (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to their Sociodemographic Characteristics (N = 180)**

Characteristic	N	%
Age (years)		
40-44	12	8
45-49	18	10
50-54	44	24
55-59	80	44
>60	26	14

Educational Qualification		
None	-	-
FSLC	6	3
WASC/GCE/NECO	10	5
OND/HND	48	28
First Degree & Above	116	64
Family Income (Monthly)		
None	-	-
<del>N</del> 10,000- <del>N</del> 29,000	2	1
<del>N</del> 30,000- <del>N</del> 49,000	14	8
<del>N</del> 50,000- <del>N</del> 69,000	22	12
<del>N</del> 70,000- <del>N</del> 89,000	30	17
<del>N</del> 90,000	112	62
Number of pregnancies		
None	4	2
1	14	8
2	28	16
3	34	18
≥4	100	56
Period of attending the clinic (months)		
6-12	24	13
13-24	36	20
25-60	52	29
61-120	46	26
>120	22	12
Family History of Breast Cancer		
Yes	62	34
No	118	66

Source: Fieldwork (2017)

A majority of the respondents were knowledgeable about mammography (86%) and they attributed their knowledge to the influence of the mass media (33%). Nevertheless, a majority of the respondents showed a rather negative attitude to the utilization of mammography on an annual basis (79%). Their major reasons were (i) fear of side effects due to radiation (26%), (ii) fear of eventually contracting the disease (24%), and (iii) financial constraints (34%) (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Knowledge and Utilization of Routine Annual Mammography among Respondents**

Variable	N	%
<b>Knowledge</b>		
Yes	155	86
No	25	14
<b>Sources</b>		
Health centres	28	16
Mass media	60	33
Friends/Retatives	22	12
Workplace	14	8
Churches	26	14.4
Schools	18	10
Others	4	2.2
Don't know	8	4.4
<b>Frequency of Usage</b>		
Never	118	66
Annually (as recommended)	13	7
Bi-annually	6	3
Occasionally (as directed by the doctor)	18	10
Don't know	25	14
<b>Reasons for Non-Usage</b>		
Fear of side effects from the radiation	46	26
Fear of eventually contracting the disease	44	24
Financial constraint due to the expensive nature of the examination	62	34
Availability of the mammography machine	8	4
Attitude of health care personnel	4	2
Pain/Inconvenience of the procedure	16	10

**Source: Fieldwork (2017)**

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study showed that the respondents were highly knowledgeable about mammography. This awareness might be as a result of their educational level. At least, about 88% of the respondents had tertiary level of education. This is quite similar to reports by Akinola R., Wright, Osunfidiya, Orogbemi and Akinola O. (2011) where 77% of women who have heard about mammography had tertiary level of education. Educated women are more likely to benefit from most messages concerning breast cancer knowledge and methods of prevention and thus more likely to learn

about mammography. The study also found that although a majority of the respondents were knowledgeable about mammography, only (7%) of the respondents have done it routinely (annually) as recommended by the American Cancer Society (ACS). It is a known fact that mammography and clinical breast examination are widely used in breast cancer screening but their beneficial impact remains controversial. The findings of this study reveals that the respondents do not go for routine mammography because of their believe that it has side effects due to its radiation, it may lead to eventually contracting the disease, and its cost. There is the need to promote a behaviour change in both women and health workers, and improve women's knowledge, attitude and practice regarding mammography. In support of these findings, Mubuuke, Kiguli-Malwadde, Businge and Byanyima (2009) found that Ugandan women also feared that mammography can cause cancer. Again, in a study conducted by Kiguli-Malwadde, Mubuuke, Businge, Kawooye, Nakatudde, Byanyima and Muyinda (2010), among women majority of the women (75%) feared that mammography would pose a potential risk to cancer. Dibble, Vanoni and Miaskowski (1997), also reported factors like mammography – induced pain and discomfort plus the effect of the radiation received during a mammoragram as a barrier to its utilization. On the contrary, Kiguli-Malwadde et al (2010) observed that lack of information about mammography and the high costs for those who know about it may be the biggest hindering factors especially in low-resourced settings.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:**

Mammography is a very crucial examination for women between the age range of 40-69years. This group is more susceptible to breast cancer. The routine check should be done on an annual basis especially for women above 54 years of age. Early diagnosis of breast cancer reduces the incidence of mortality from the disease. Owing to this fact, health workers have an important role in improving utilization of mammography among women especially among hospital attendees. The public health educators and community health extension workers should be appropriately mobilized to reach the public on issues concerning the use of mammography in the prompt detection of early breast cancer symptoms. This should be done by creating awareness on the importance of routine annual mammography through seminars, use of the mass media, conferences etc.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to almighty God for his mercies. I sincerely thank all the respondents who sacrificed time to respond to the questionnaire items provided for this study. I am also grateful to my research assistants who helped in the administration of the research instrument (the questionnaire). Finally, big thanks to the entire staff and management of Women and Children Outreach Hospital Okota, Lagos, Lagos State, Nigeria.

## REFERENCES

- Adebamowo, C.A. and Ajayi, O.O. (2000). Breast cancer in Nigeria. *West African J. Med.*, 19:179-191.
- Akinola, R., Wright, K., Osunfidiya, O., Orogbemi, O. and Akinola, O. (2011). Mammography and mammography screening: Are female patients at a teaching hospital in Lagos, Nigeria aware of these procedures? *Diagn. Interv. Radiol.*, 17 (2): 125-129.
- Anderson, B.O., Yip, C.H., Smith, R.A., Shyyan, R., Sener, S.F., Eniu, A., Carlson, R., Azavedo, E. and Harford, J. (2008). Guideline implementation for breast healthcare in low-income and middle income countries: Overview of the Breast Health Global Initiative Global Summit. *A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 113: 2221-43.
- Bello, O.T., Adekanle, A.D. and Aremu, A. (2007). A survey of physicians' attitudes and practices to screening mammography in osogbo and Ibadan, South-West Nigeria. *International Journal of Radiology*, 6:1-6.
- Dibble, S., Vanani, J. and Miaskowski, C. (1997). Women's attitudes towards breast cancer screening procedures: Differences by ethnicity. *Women's Health Issues*, 7(1): 47-54.
- Fletcher, S.W. and Elmore, J.G. (2003). Mammographic screening for breast cancer. *N. Engl. J. Med.*, 348: 1672-80.
- Kiguli-Malwadde, E., Mubuuke, Businge, F., Kawooya, G., Nakatudde, R., Byanyima, K. and Muyinda, Z. (2010). Current Knowledge, attitudes and practices of women on breast cancer and mammography at Mulago Hospital. *The Pan African Medical Journal*, 5:9.

- Lee, E.O., Ahn, S.H., You, C., Lee, D., Han, W., Choe, K. and Noh, D.Y. (2004). Determining the main risk factors and high risk groups of breast cancer using a predictive model for breast cancer risk assessment in South Korea. *Cancer Nurs.*, 27 (5): 400-6.
- Mubuuke, A.G., Kiguli-Malwadde, E.I., Businge, F. and Byanyima, R. (2009). Current knowledge, attitudes and practices of expectant women toward routine sonography in pregnancy at Naguru health centre, Uganda. *Pan African Medical Journal*, 3:1.
- Okobia, M.N., Bunker, C.H., Okonofua, F.E. and Osime, U. (2006). Knowledge, attitude and practice of Nigerian women towards breast cancer: A cross-sectional study *World J. Surg. Onc.*, 4:11.
- Parkin, D.M., Bray, F., Ferlay, J. and Pisani, P. (2002). Global cancer statistics. *A Cancer Journal for Clinicians*, 55(2): 74-108.
- Tabar, L., Vitak, B., Chen, H., Yen, M., Duffy, S. and Smith, R. (2001). Beyond randomized controlled trials, organized mammography screening substantially reduces breast carcinoma mortality. *Cancer*, 91:1724-31.
- Tang, T., Solomon, L. and McCracken, L.M. (2000). Cultural barriers to mammography, clinical breast exam, and breast self-exam among Chinese-American women 60 and older. *Prev. Med.*, 31 (5): 575-83.