A Survey on Singaporean Women’s Knowledge, Perception and Practices of Mammogram Screening

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Abstract

Introduction: Singapore is the first Asian country to establish a nationwide breast screening programme, but our breast cancer screening uptake lags behind the Western countries. This survey focused on the subject of screening mammography, to assess the reasons for non-attendance and explore ways to improve our screening uptake. Materials and Methods: Females ≥21 years old were approached at primary healthcare clinics to participate in this survey, which questioned their knowledge, perception and expectations of breast screening. Results: There were 1011 respondents. Of the 740 respondents ≥40 years old, 332 respondents (45.5%) went for regular mammogram screening. Women who had lower household incomes [<$2000 (OR 0.49; 95% CI, 0.28 to 0.85); $2000 to $3999 (OR 0.59; 95% CI, 0.36 to 0.97)], did not know anyone with breast cancer (OR 0.62; 95% CI, 0.42 to 0.92), did not perform breast self-examination (OR 0.42; 95% CI, 0.28 to 0.62), had lower knowledge scores (OR 0.34; 95% CI 0.22 to 0.51), did not attend other health screening (OR 0.14; 95% CI, 0.05 to 0.41), and perceived mammography as embarrassing (OR 0.55; 95% CI, 0.31 to 0.96), were less likely to attend mammographic screening. Many did not know that screening is for the asymptomatic (51.2%), or the age to start screening (46.3%). Most respondents preferred to have their mammograms in the polyclinics (62.2%) and their screening reminders to be through short messaging service (SMS) (46.0%). Conclusion: Our results show the current influences on Singapore women’s screening practices, and also revealed that their understanding of mammogram screening is limited despite a high level of breast cancer awareness.

Key words: Breast screening, Breast cancer, Asian women