

Knowledge and Performance of Breast Self-Examination among Student Nurses

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ABSTRACT

Since 1991 breast cancer has been the second leading cause of cancer admissions into the hospitals of Ministry of Health Malaysia. The purpose of this cross-sectional descriptive survey was to determine the knowledge regarding breast cancer which is inclusive of risk factors; signs and symptoms; and breast self-examination and skills of breast self-examination among student nurses. The Champion's Revised Health Belief Model was used as the conceptual model in the study to measure the students' health beliefs about breast cancer and breast self-examination. The purposive sample consisted of 45 nursing students who have completed the subject of Nursing Care of Mother and Child or Obstetrics and Gynecology. The research instruments used in this study consist of a questionnaire of 66 items and a checklist for breast self-examination. Data collected are self-administered and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results found that knowledge of risk factors was fair, knowledge of signs and symptoms and breast self-examination was good overall. Student's health belief scores are moderate for seriousness, benefits, confidence and health motivation and low for perceived barriers. Students demonstrated poor skills in palpation of the breast. This study offers more insights into the knowledge regarding breast cancer and performance of breast self-examination among student nurses and in summary, more emphasis must be placed on their health beliefs and breast self-examination practice.