

Knowledge regarding the prevention of breast disease among women of childbearing age

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Abstract

Aim of the study: The analysis of the influence of external (place of residence, financial condition) and internal factors (age, education) on the awareness of women in childbearing age associated with their preventive actions in the sphere of breast diseases.

Material and Methods: The study included 300 women aged 19 to 48. The diagnostic poll method was used in the study. The research tool was a self-elaborated survey questionnaire dedicated to women in the childbearing age which included the questions concerning the risk factors and prevention of breast cancer as well as respondents' particulars.

Results: Higher education was closely related to the correct answers evaluating the level of knowledge in half the questions, in case of place of residence (city/village) essential differences concerned just two problems, similarly as in the case of respondents age- below and above the age of 30/31 whereas the financial condition only in one question.

Conclusions: External and internal factors diversely influence the awareness of women in childbearing age associated with their preventive actions in the sphere of breast diseases and their education has the greatest influence.

Key words:

woman's health,
knowledge,
prevention,
mammary glands

Introduction

Breast cancer is one of the most frequent malignant neoplasms among women in Poland. Over five thousand women die because of it every year. It is the consequence of the late detection of tumours, which is the effect of poor social awareness and therefore poor knowledge on risk factors but, above all, insufficient breast cancer prevention [1]. The priority in the fight with this disease should be patient's knowledge regarding breast cancer risk factors, methods of its early detection, causes of incidence and methods of prevention. Learning about it considerably increases the chances of this neoplasm prevention as well as the chances of recovery and less invasive therapy [2].

Basing on contemporary knowledge on the factors contributing to the incidence of breast cancer adverse health behaviours can be eliminated or corrected thus, increasing women's health awareness [3].

Early forms of breast cancer most frequently don't have any symptoms which is the reason why the patients delay going to see the doctor. The occurrence of symptoms is frequently related to the advanced form of this disease [4].

Essential element in the prevention of breast neoplasm is well conducted prevention among women and increase in health education in this area. The fundamental method in the prevention of breast diseases is self-examination of breasts conducted regularly, once a month by women since the age of 20 [5]. Mammography is additionally used in breast neoplasm prevention. Thanks to the presently conducted in Poland Breast Cancer Early Detection Population Programme women aged 50-59 can have mammography performed free of charge [3].

Aim of the study

The aim of the study was analysis of the influence of external and internal factors on the awareness of women in childbearing age associated with their prophylactic actions in the sphere of breast diseases. The standard of living and the place of residence were defined as external factors, whereas education and age were defined as internal factors.

Material and methods

The study was conducted within 6 months- since December 2016 to May 2017. The diagnostic poll method was used in the study. The study included 300 women. The mean age of the studied was 26 (SD=6.28). The youngest participant was 19 while the oldest 48. Sixty-three percent of the surveyed lived in the city, whereas 37% lived in the village. Among the surveyed 57% had higher education, 40% secondary and 3% vocational or primary education. In the question concerning financial conditions every fourth participant (25%) assessed her conditions as very good, 59% as average and 14% as poor.

The research tool was self-elaborated survey questionnaire dedicated to women in the childbearing age which included the questions concerning the risk factors and prophylaxis of breast cancer as well as respondents' particulars. Results elaboration was based on statistical analysis of measurable (quantitative) and non-measurable (qualitative) characteristics. The frequency and percentage of the valid answers were calculated for all qualitative parameters. Statistical analysis was performed with the use of Statistica software package and Excel spreadsheet. Chi square test was used for the analysis of statistical significance. Chi square $p < 0.05$ results were considered significant.

Results

Higher education was closely related to the correct answers evaluating the level of knowledge in half the questions (6/12) and in the case of the place of residence (city/village) significant differences concerned just two problems, similarly as in the case of respondents age- below and above the age of 30/31(2/12) and financial conditions (very good/good/poor) only in 1 question.

Education has the greatest influence on the surveyed level of knowledge about preventive actions concerning breast diseases prevention. Age does not show a significant influence on the level of knowledge of the studied women. Place of residence has little influence on women's awareness on breast

cancer prevention. There is no correlation between the financial conditions and the level of knowledge of women in the childbearing age on breast diseases prevention (see table 1). Summing up the obtained results it can be stated that in the analysis of the group of the studied women the internal factors influence their knowledge about the prevention of breast diseases to a greater extent than the external factors.

Discussion

Breast cancer is a very serious social problem both in Poland and around the world [6]. The main cause of breast cancer mortality is late detection of advanced forms of neoplastic changes which can be mainly related with women's poor health awareness [7]. Despite numerous prophylactic campaigns almost 50% women with the diagnosed breast cancer die. Early detection predisposes to better prognosis and recovery [8]. An essential issue in the fight with breast cancer seems to be the knowledge about its prevention, methods of detection, reasons of its incidence, preventive methods and risk factors. It is known that genetic predispositions are the most important factor of breast cancer incidence. According to Wołowski and assoc. the majority of the studied women (41%)

regarded heredity as the main factor of breast cancer incidence [7]. In the studies of Bogusz et al. as much as 90% of the surveyed indicated heredity as the most important factor of breast cancer [9]. In the self-studies as well, the surveyed assessed genetic factors as the most predisposing to breast cancer by defining them as the most harmful among the presented risk factors. Basing on Nowicki at al. no difference was revealed in the general level of knowledge about breast cancer and its prevention between village and city residents. Nowicki also revealed, that educated women had higher level of knowledge about breast cancer and its prevention [6]. The studies also confirmed this correlation- education is the main factor that influences the level of knowledge about the prevention of breast diseases. Basing on self-studies little correlation was stated between the place of residence and women's awareness of breast diseases prevention. On the basis of self-studies, the surveyed assessed their knowledge of breast cancer prevention as moderate. Similar results were obtained in Bogusz and assoc. studies where 74% respondents in perimenopause period think, that their knowledge about breast cancer prevention is on the moderate level [9]. The majority of women (42%) surveyed in the studies of Lewandowska at al. also assess their knowledge about

Table 1

Statistically significant test results according to the answers to questions according to the questionnaire.

Question	Internal factors		External factors	
	age	education	residence	financial conditions
Self-examination should be performed (how often?)	NS	p<0,000	NS	NS
Breast self-examination should be performed (In what position?)	NS	p< 0,000	p<0,034	NS
In Your opinion, what is the percentage of the benign pathologic changes of mammary gland?	NS	p< 0,043	NS	NS
Early form of breast cancer (Symptoms)	NS	NS	p< 0,032	NS
In your opinion, do pregnancy and lactation decrease the risk of breast cancer incidence?	p< 0,047	p< 0,021	NS	NS
Which methods of mammary gland control can be used in pregnancy?	p< 0,006	p< 0,019	NS	NS

the prevention of breast cancer as moderate [10]. The same results were obtained by T. Zuzak et al. showing that students of medical universities have moderate knowledge about the epidemiology of breast cancer [11]. According to Ślusarska et al. the level of knowledge of the surveyed women about the risk factors and the prevention of breast cancer was just satisfactory and only little more than 10% of the studied had a good level of knowledge [1]. In the view of the above it can be stated, that the general knowledge of women on breast diseases prevention is on the moderate level which can be rephrased as- insufficient.

Conclusions

External and internal factors diversely influence the awareness of women in the childbearing age about prophylactic actions in the sphere of breast diseases. There is a need to make women become more active in the sphere of improvement of their level of knowledge about breast diseases prevention and the success of screening tests largely depends on women's awareness in this sphere.

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