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Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of breast self-examination among female Medical students in the University of Lagos.

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ABSTRACT

Background: Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer mortality in women worldwide. The incidence of breast cancer is rising more rapidly in population groups that enjoyed a low incidence of the disease.

Objective: The purpose of this study was to investigate the knowledge, attitude and practice of breast self-examination (BSE) among female medical students in University of Lagos.

Method: The study was designed as a cross sectional survey of female students in the college of medicine. The aim was to assess level of their knowledge about breast cancer, attitude and their practice of BSE. A self-administered questionnaire prepared by the author was employed. Consent was obtained and assurance of confidentiality of responses was given to each respondent.

Results: Majority of the respondents, 40.7% were from the age group 21-22 drawn from first to sixth year medical students. 97.3% had heard of breast cancer and breast self-examination. 54.8% of the respondents heard of breast cancer from television/ radio. Most of the respondents, 85.8% knew how to perform breast self-examination correctly. Only 65.4% of the respondents thought that breast self-examination was necessary. 43.5% of the respondents said that the last time they performed breast self-examination less than a year ago. Majority of the respondents, 69.6% preferred to perform breast self-examination in the morning while 47.7% of the respondents preferred to carry out breast self-examination in front of the mirror.

Conclusion: There was a high level of awareness of breast cancer and breast self-examination among the respondents. Their attitude towards breast cancer and breast self-examination was fair though the practice was poor.