RESEARCH TOPIC: IMPACT OF BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ON KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOUR OF URBAN WOMEN: A CASE STUDY OF FEMALE SECONDARY TEACHERS IN NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

Health communication campaigns have for a long time been employed to create awareness about the risks of various diseases and habits which are detrimental to health. In addition, some have sought to inspire change in behaviour or promote a specific behaviour. Breast cancer awareness campaigns, which are more aggressive in the month of October, have been used to encourage screening and breast self-examination that would allow for early detection and successful treatment thereafter. The awareness campaigns specify the population that stands the greatest risk to get cancer which in the case of breast cancer, it is women.

The main objective of this research was to assess the effectiveness of health communication campaigns on the knowledge, awareness and behaviour of female secondary teachers in regard to breast cancer. The target group was in the age bracket of 30 – 60 years. This target group was chosen because studies have shown they are susceptible due to occupational risk factors. The findings of this study reveal that the respondents have low to moderate knowledge on issues relating to breast cancer and poor screening behaviour. For example 70% identified lump as the only symptom and only 30% perform breast self examination at the correct intervals. 63% have never gone for hospital screening and only 16% have gone for screening consistently.

The television, radio and newspapers were cited as the most common and effective sources of information. The respondents reported that the information they had about breast cancer was mostly from these three sources. Health professionals were mentioned by 2% and CCTV performed as poorly.

Based on these findings, the research recommends that more aggressive campaigns be conducted throughout the year. Television, radio and newspapers should be used as the media of communicating breast cancer messages. Messages should emphasize early detection and prevention. Churches should be used to disseminate information. The government should be more proactive in funding the awareness campaigns.