

INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is a major public health problem in both developed and developing countries with more than one million new cases diagnosed annually worldwide. (*Aldubai et al., 2012*)

Prognosis and survival rates of breast cancer are better in developed countries due to early diagnosis and treatment. (*Gilani et al., 2010*)

Breast cancer is the leading cause of female cancer related mortality, with more than 410,000 deaths. (*Coughlin and Ekwueme, 2009*).

In the Eastern Mediterranean Region BC is the second ranking Cause of cancer deaths, but actually it is largely a preventabl disease. (*World Health Organization, 2009*)

In Egypt, BC is the most common cancer among women, representing 18.9% of total cancer cases (35.1% in women). with an age-adjusted rate of 49.6 per 100 000 population. (*Elattar et al., 2002-2003*)

In countries with limited resources, majority of females present with advanced or metastatic breast cancer leading to poor outcome. (*Anderson et al., 2006*)

Early detection of breast cancer plays an important role in reducing it's morbidity and mortality .theoretically, 95% survival rate could be achieved if this cancer was diagnosed at an early stage. (*Tavafian et al., 2009*)

The available and advisable methods for breast cancer screening worldwide are breast self examination (BSE), clinical breast examination (CBE) and mammogram, however, in most of developing countries the routine screening mammographies are often unavailable due to financial issues and the lack of accurate data on the burden of breast cancer in these countries (*Coughlin and Ekwueme, 2009*).

Therefore, it is important to empower women on the BSE as a primary tool in screening the breast cancer. (*Karayurt et al., 2008*).

It was reported that women who practicing regular BSE were presented more often with clinically early tumors. (*Rosmawati, 2010*)

In fact, BSE alone is believed to be appropriate and effective methods of ensuring early detection of breast cancer. It could detect 40% of breast lesion. (*Gupta et al., 2009*)

Rationale of the study

Breast cancer is highly prevailing among females world wide and also in Egypt, so early diagnosis of breast cancer increase chances of complete cure and 5 year survival rate. Breast self examination is simple and inexpensive screening test if compared by mammographic screening and can be done by large sector of females at age of 19 years so it is very important specially in developing countries which have limited resources . Evaluation of knowledge ,attitude and practice of breast self examination is the 1st step to realize the obstacles facing women in practicing BSE, and try to overcome them as a first step to emphasize the culture of breast cancer screening.