Prevalence of Known Risk Factors of Breast Cancer and Breast Cancer Screening Practices Among Women in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

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- **Abstract**

- **Background:** Breast cancer rates are rising both in the developed and the developing world, probably due to increase in life expectancy, increasing urbanization and adoption of western lifestyles. Incidence of breast cancer is reported to be increasing in India and it has become the most common cancer among women. Kerala and its capital city Thiruvananthapuram are also following the same pattern. Early detection and treatment of breast cancer is highly beneficial as it leads to increased survival rates and better quality of life to the patient. By identifying the risk factors and through regular and proper screening practices, we can detect the high-risk population for this disease and contribute to its prevention and early treatment. Aim: 1. To study the prevalence of known risk factors of breast cancer among women aged 20 years and above in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. 2. To describe the breast cancer screening practices prevalent in the study population and to find out the proportion of high-risk individuals using breast cancer risk calculator. **Methods:** A community based cross sectional survey was conducted among 2000 women hailing from Thiruvananthapuram. General population was invited through mass media to attend breast cancer screening camps. 2000 women aged more than 20 years who attended the camps and gave informed consent were included in the study. Data were collected from 40 participants each from 50 camps out of a total of 150 screening camps. A semi structured pro forma was used to collect the data regarding the sociodemographic profile, the various known risk factors of breast cancer according to research literature and breast cancer screening methods undergone. Descriptive statistics was done using SPSS version 16. Results are expressed in proportions with 95% confidence interval, wherever appropriate. **Results:** The mean age of the study population was 45.67 years. Majority of the women 82.5% had never undergone any sort of breast cancer

screening. Clinical breast examination alone was undergone by 9.8%. Breast cancer risk calculator showed that 65% of the women screened had normal risk, 22.2% had moderate risk and 12.9% had high risk. **Conclusion:** Increased prevalence of major known risk factors of breast cancer like positive family history, low breast-feeding duration, late age at menopause, are found. Also, the prevalence of modifiable risk factors like obesity and low physical activity are high. Majority of the study participants have never undergone any breast cancer screening. Breast cancer risk calculator showed a fairly high prevalence of study participants in high risk and moderate risk category and therefore women need to be motivated to undergo regular screening.

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