

ABSTRACT

Introduction. Breast cancer is among the leading causes of cancer deaths world wide, it is the leading cause of cancer deaths in less developed. In Uganda it is the second main cause of non HIV cancer related deaths. Facilities for early screening are extremely limited yet early diagnosis improves survival. The use of mammograms, Ultra sound scans and clinical breast examination is limited in Uganda, Breast self examination is recommended by the national cancer institute as the best method for early detection of breast cancer in Uganda.

Objective. Assessment of the knowledge, attitudes and practices of breast self examination among female students of International health sciences university.

Method. The study was a descriptive cross section study where 146 female students volunteered to participate. Data was collected using simple random sampling with the use of structured administered questionnaires that included socio-demographic, knowledge, attitudes and practices.

Results. The study consisted of 146 International Health Sciences University female students, majority 87(59.6%) were aged 20-24 years. 105(71.9%) were single, 140(95.9%) had heard about BSE where by health facilities and schools were the source of information for most of the respondents. Less than half of the respondents 39(27%) knew the right age to begin BSE and only 70(47.9%) knew that BSE should be monthly. Altogether 141(96.5%) had a positive attitude. 107(73.3%) had ever done BSE and 97(90.7%) of them were currently doing it. 97(66.4%) knew that the best position is standing in front of the mirror, majority 133(91. 1%) knew the part of the hand used when palpating. 101(69.2%) reported that they feel for breast lump. 28(19.2%) feel for thickening and 17(11.6%) did not know.

Conclusion. There is a positive attitude towards BSF among students. Many female students in the university practice BSF in a way which is not right.

Recommendations. There is need for emphasizing the correct technique and need to evaluate BSE efficacy.