

ABSTRACT

Despite the availability of lifesaving cancer treatment modalities including chemotherapy and radiotherapy, breast cancer remains a major global health concern contributing to 23% of cancer cases amongst females. Globally, breast cancer is the leading type of cancer in incidence (11.6%) of all new cases and mortality (6.6%) of all cancer deaths among females. Resource-poor countries are greatly affected as evidenced by the fact that breast cancer is a leading cause of cancer-related deaths. Overall, breast cancer is the leading cancer in Kenya in incidence with 5,985 new cases accounting for 12.5% of all new cancer cases and 20.9% in women alone. Available data shows that majority of breast cancer patients present in late stage, contributing to higher mortality and low overall survival. In order to reduce incidence of late presentation of breast cancer and treat effectively, it is important to assess knowledge, practice and perception on prevention of breast cancer among women of reproductive age. The current study sought to examine knowledge, practice and perception on breast cancer prevention among ANC mothers visiting Antenatal clinic at Longisa County Referral Hospital, Bomet County, Kenya. The study utilized a cross-sectional hospital based study design on a sample of 194 women between 15-49 years of age. The participants were purposely sampled from women attending Longisa Hospital ANC Clinic and 5 health care providers working in the same clinic. Structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the study participants and Key Informant Interview was administered to health care provider (Doctors/Nurses/Clinicians) working in Antenatal Clinic. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used for data entry, which allowed for analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency charts, tables, graphs and proportions were used in presentation of data. The respondents were not knowledgeable on breast cancer matters as 69.20% did not comprehend procedures adhered to while performing Breast Self-Examination. Only 30.80% women knew how to carry out BSE. On the other hand, up to 73.70% of the respondents reported not to have undergone Clinical Breast Examination (CBE). Most of the respondents (96.35%) had not done mammography assessment for breast cancer. The respondents had positive perceptions on breast cancer matters as 98.39% agreed that breast cancer mortalities reduce when prevention methods are adopted and practiced. Similarly, 97.32% believed that early detection is crucial for timely treatment and management. This study shows that the study participants had poor knowledge on breast cancer, breast cancer screening practices and they fortunately regard early detection is crucial for timely treatment and improve survival. The study findings provide a viable platform for development of develop policy and guidelines, which increase detection of breast cancer in its early stage and hence improve prognosis and reduced mortality. There is need for those who provide direct health care to disseminate relevant messages to population on breast cancer aspect as knowledge on risk factors, screening practices and other available prevention measures.