

ABSTRACT

The knowledge of, attitudes to, and beliefs concerning cancer of the prostate among a selected group of Jamaican males aged 45 years and over.

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The annual incidence of prostate cancer has increased dramatically during the last ten years in the United States; the number of cases in the Caribbean, including Jamaica, have also been increasing. Various reasons have been suggested for the increased rates, among them are heightened patient awareness, improved diagnostic tools enabling early detection of prostate cancer, and improved accuracy in reporting new cases.

A cross-sectional survey among males, 45 years and over, was conducted among professional, skilled, and unskilled workers of the University of Technology and the University of the West Indies, to determine their knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs as they relate to signs and symptoms, risk factors, screening methods, treatment, and susceptibility to prostate cancer.

The main findings were that:

- i) Over 50% of the males lacked knowledge in all aspects of signs and symptoms, risk factors, screening methods, and treatment of prostate cancer;
- ii) there was a moderately positive attitude to the principle of early testing to detect for prostate cancer, and to the digital rectal examination.

- iii) there was a trend towards over consumption of foods high in fat;
- iv) there was a positive family history of cancer which meant that about 25% of the respondents were susceptible to prostate cancer.

The main conclusion was that the respondents were deficient in knowledge about the pertinent aspects of prostate cancer e.g risk factors, but they had a positive attitude to screening for early detection of the disease; there was a small group that was susceptible to prostate cancer because of their family history and the majority of the sample were placing themselves at risk because of their improper dietary practices.