

ABSTRACT

Breast Cancer is probably one of the diseases most feared by women, impacting as it does on their psychosocial image. In the United States it is the single leading cause of death for women in the 40-49 age group and here in Jamaica it has shown a steadily rising incidence. Mammography was first introduced to the island in 1980 on a very limited basis and it was another 8 years before the next facility opened. By the year 2000 mammograms were fairly available on an island wide basis however the national compliance rate stood at approximately 4%. This low compliance rate has remained stagnant and is in spite of a mass media education effort launched by the Jamaica Cancer Society in 1995. This study takes a look at the impact of health promotion and seeks to identify the knowledge, attitudes and practices influencing women to adhere to breast cancer screening guidelines. A cross-sectional survey was performed utilizing telephone interviews. 234 women in the over 35 age group were interviewed within various socio-economic strata (SES) and in both rural and urban locations. Knowledge, attitudes and practices were assessed in respect of compliance with breast cancer screening guidelines. The findings suggest that the strongest motivator for compliance is a personal perception of risk of the disease.