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## A Descriptive Study To Assess The Awareness And Knowledge Regarding Breast Self-Examination Among Women In Selected Rural Areas Of Haryana.

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### Abstract

**Background:** Breast cancer is one of the most prevalent forms of cancer affecting women globally, and early detection plays a crucial role in reducing morbidity and mortality. Breast Self-Examination (BSE) is a simple, cost-effective method for early detection.

**Aim:** This study aims to assess the awareness and knowledge regarding BSE among women in selected rural areas of Haryana.

**Methodology:** A descriptive research design was adopted. The study included 60 women selected through non-probability purposive sampling. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results:** Among 60 participants, 16.7% had poor knowledge, 55% had average knowledge, and 28.3% had good knowledge. Factors such as education and previous exposure to information on BSE showed a significant association with awareness levels.

**Conclusion:** The study reveals that while awareness exists among some women, the overall knowledge regarding BSE remains limited. Targeted health education and community-based interventions are essential to empower women with life-saving knowledge and practices.

### Introduction

Breast cancer remains a leading cause of cancer-related deaths among women worldwide. Early detection through practices like Breast Self-Examination (BSE) can significantly reduce mortality. Despite its simplicity and low cost, awareness and regular practice of BSE remain low, particularly in rural areas of India. The present study aims to evaluate the awareness and knowledge of BSE among women residing in rural parts of Haryana. It also explores factors influencing their understanding and practice of BSE.

## Methodology

A non-experimental descriptive design was employed. The study was conducted in selected rural areas of Haryana. A total of 60 women were selected using purposive sampling. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire comprising demographic details and 20 questions related to knowledge of breast cancer and BSE. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage) and inferential statistics to examine the association between knowledge levels and selected sociodemographic variables. Ethical considerations were followed, and informed consent was obtained from each participant.

## Findings of the Study

The findings revealed that the majority of the participants were between 20–40 years of age. Educational levels varied, with most women having completed secondary or senior secondary education. In terms of awareness about breast self-examination:

- 28.3% of women had good knowledge
- 55% had average knowledge
- 16.7% had poor knowledge

These figures suggest that while a significant proportion of women have heard of BSE, there are still large gaps in comprehensive knowledge and correct techniques of practice. A notable number of participants reported learning about BSE from healthcare workers and television. However, very few women practiced BSE regularly or understood the correct method or timing. Statistical analysis indicated a significant association between knowledge scores and educational qualification, prior exposure to health talks, and family history of breast diseases.

## Discussion

The findings reflect similar patterns seen in studies conducted in other rural parts of India, where limited educational exposure and health resources contribute to poor awareness. Though BSE is promoted as a tool for early detection, it remains underutilized.

The moderate knowledge score among the majority suggests that health education programs—especially those involving local health workers and community nurses—can play a pivotal role in bridging the knowledge gap.

Further, routine health check-up camps in rural areas could improve not only awareness but also practice and early reporting of breast anomalies.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that awareness regarding Breast Self-Examination is moderate among rural women in Ludhiana, Punjab. However, good knowledge was found only in a minority. Since early detection is key to reducing breast cancer mortality, there is an urgent need for community-based awareness campaigns, especially targeting less educated women.

## Keywords

Breast Self-Examination, Breast Cancer Awareness, Women's Health, Rural Health, Early Detection, Ludhiana, Preventive Care