Chapter 8

EVALUATION ON THE AWARENESS OF BREAST CANCER AND BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS USING HEALTH BELIEF MODEL

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INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer is the most-commonly seen cancer type in women and ranks first among cancer-related death cases. A half million cancer-related death cases (15% of all cancer-related death cases in women) and approximately 1.7 million new cancer cases (25% of all cancer cases in women) occurred in 2012 (World Cancer Report, 2014). According to Globocan data for 2012 published by International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), breast cancer is among the top five cancers which are most commonly seen in women in Turkey, in the world, in the EU countries and the US. The date for 2014 indicated that one of every four women diagnosed with cancer has breast cancer and the total number of women diagnosed with breast cancer per year is 16,646. It is seen that 44.5% and 40.4% of the women diagnosed with breast cancer in Turkey are aged between 50 and 69, and between 25 and 49, respectively (Türkiye Halk Sağlığı Kurumu, 2017).

Similar to other cancer types, early diagnosis of breast cancer is quite important for the prognosis of the disease and recovery. Mammography, breast self-examination (BSE) and clinical breast examination are influential on the early diagnosis of breast cancer (Champion, 1999; Lu, 2001; Elik, 2006; Avcı et. al., 2007;

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Conclusion and Suggestions

The results of this study show that majority of the students see themselves as having moderate level of knowledge about BSE, do not perform BSE regularly and did not receive a specific training regarding BSE. It was seen that BES habits of the students are influenced significantly by dimensions of barrier and confidence within health belief level. Therefore, it can be advised to raise the awareness of breast cancer that the necessary informing should be made and training programs for developing the confidence perception of the person to eliminate the perceived barriers in health belief model. To enable the women to prevalently benefit from the screening programs served by healthcare professionals and to inform them about the recent developments in treatment and increased opportunities of early diagnosis may raise the confidence perception of women, thereby mitigating the breast cancer risk. In this sense, healthcare professionals play substantial roles. Furthermore, the social awareness about this issue can be expanded and health belief levels of the society can be increased through various public service ads, and the events held by non-governmental organizations and other public/private institutions as part of the "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" between October 1 and 31. Consequently, it is thought that health beliefs of the women with high awareness of breast cancer will be affected positively. If every woman has regular BSE on a monthly basis particularly from the age of 20, she will know her own breast tissue and notice any anomaly shortly. This point is quite important for early diagnosis of breast cancer. In addition to them, results of this study contain findings about the research subject from a definite group and could not be generalized for the whole population. This is one of the limitations of this research.

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