

**EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN ENCOURAGING SELF-CARE AND
PREVENTION OF FEMALE CANCER****ATIVIDADES EDUCATIVAS ESTIMULANDO O AUTOCUIDADO E PREVENÇÃO
DO CÂNCER FEMININO****ACTIVIDADES EDUCATIVAS ESTIMULANDO EL AUTOCUIDADO Y
PREVENCIÓN DEL CÁNCER FEMENINO**

Lorena Campos Mendes¹, Thaís Cristina Elias², Taciana Nunes dos Santos³, Erika Mendes Tayar⁴, Sueli da Silva Riul⁵

ABSTRACT

Aim: this study aimed to describe educational practices conducted with students of night schools state, in the city of Uberaba/MG, about actions to encourage self-care in relation to the prevention and diagnosis of breast cancer and cervical cancer. **Method:** this is an experience report developed with students from state schools on a regular basis and face modality of nighttime. **Results:** it benefited a group of approximately 1040 students. It was noted that, in general, women were deprived of information related to the subject and who had greater knowledge deficit regarding the breast self-examination regarding the vaginal smears. **Final considerations:** it was observed that the transmission of information in this context is extremely important, and presents itself as an essential tool in nursing care.

Descriptors: Breast self-examination; Health education; Nursing; Vaginal smears; Women's health.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever as práticas educativas, realizadas com estudantes do ensino médio noturno de escolas estaduais do município de Uberaba/MG, a respeito de ações de incentivo ao autocuidado em relação à prevenção e diagnóstico do câncer de mama e do colo do útero. **Método:** trata-se de um relato de experiência desenvolvido com alunas de escolas estaduais de caráter regular e modalidade presencial do período noturno. **Resultados:** foi beneficiado um grupo de aproximadamente 1040 estudantes. Notou-se que, de um modo geral, as mulheres eram carentes de informações relacionadas à temática e que possuíam um déficit de

1 Enfermeira. Mestre em Atenção à Saúde. Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM). E-mail: lorena_camposmendes@hotmail.com

2 Enfermeira. Mestre em Atenção à Saúde. Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM). E-mail: thaiscelias2@hotmail.com

3 Acadêmica do Centro de Graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM). E-mail: taciana.nunes@hotmail.com

4 Acadêmica do Centro de Graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM). E-mail: erikatayar@hotmail.com

5 Enfermeira e obstetriz. Mestre e doutora em Enfermagem Fundamental. Professora Associada do Programa de Pós Graduação em Atenção à Saúde da Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (UFTM). E-mail: sueliriul@terra.com.br

conhecimento maior referente à Autopalpação das Mamas em relação ao exame Papanicolaou. **Considerações finais:** observou-se que a transmissão de informações neste contexto é de extrema importância, e apresenta-se como uma ferramenta fundamental na assistência de Enfermagem.

Descritores: Autoexame de mama; Educação em saúde; Enfermagem; Esfregaço vaginal; Saúde da mulher.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir las prácticas educativas, realizadas con estudiantes de la enseñanza media nocturna de escuelas estatales del municipio de Uberaba/MG, a respecto de acciones de incentivo al autocuidado en relación a prevención y diagnóstico del cáncer de mama y del cuello del útero. **Método:** se trata de un relato de experiencia desarrollado con alumnas de escuelas estatales de carácter regular y modalidad presencial del período nocturno. **Resultados:** fue beneficiado un grupo de aproximadamente 1040 estudiantes. Se notó que, de una manera general, las mujeres eran carentes de informaciones relacionadas a la temática y que poseían un déficit de conocimientos mayor referente a la Auto palpación de las Mamas en relación al examen Papanicolaou. **Consideraciones finales:** se observó que la transmisión de informaciones en este contexto es de extrema importancia, y se presenta como una herramienta fundamental en la asistencia de Enfermería.

Descriptor: Autoexamen de mama; Educación en salud; Enfermería; Frotis Vaginal; Salud de la mujer.

INTRODUCTION

Cancer (CA) is currently considered a public health problem, since it is the second cause of death by disease in the world as well as in Brazil, preceded by

one caused by cardiovascular diseases.¹ Breast cancer is the type that most affects women worldwide, both in developing as in developed countries. According to data from the National Cancer Institute (INCA), breast CA is the most common cancer among women in Brazil. For the years 2016 to 2017 it will be expected 57,960 new cases with an estimated risk of 56.20 cases per 100,000 women.²

Although breast CA can be considered of good prognosis if detected and treated in a timely manner, mortality rates in Brazil remain high, probably because the disease is still diagnosed late in stages already advanced.³

Nevertheless, cervical CA is the fourth most common malignancy among women worldwide and is directly linked to the country's development level, two times more common in less developed countries. The number of new cases of uterine cervical CA expected for Brazil in the years 2016-2017 will be 16,340, with an estimated risk of 15.85 cases per 100,000 women.²

Based on this information we can see the importance of educational activities in the guidance for the detection of CA. Breast self-examination (BSE) and the pap smear screening promote self-care and allow the woman to have greater intimacy and understanding of herself, providing benefit to her health and detection of these

tumors.

Although preventive tests for breast and cervical CA are widely disseminated by the media and health professionals, studies show that their knowledge is not complete and homogeneous.^{4,5} The nursing team plays in this context an important role, with the first implementation of educational practices that encourage and empower the individual, making it the active subject in the health-disease, in addition to increasing the frequency and adherence to other imaging techniques.⁶

This report aimed to describe the educational practices performed with students from night high school of state schools in Uberaba/MG, related to actions of stimulation to self-care and the prevention and early diagnosis of breast and cervical CA.

METHOD

This is an experience report from a work of the master's course at the Graduate Program in Health Care (PPGAS), with the participation of students from the Nursing undergraduate course at the Federal University of Triangulo Mineiro (UFTM), who agreed to contribute to the initiative, as a university extension activity. This work was developed with women enrolled in state schools on a regular basis and face modality of nighttime in the city of

Uberaba / MG who were present at the time of the activity.

The activities were carried out in the period from February to March 2014, and included all state schools offering nighttime high school in the urban area of the municipality, for a total of twenty institutions. Educational activities lasted an average of 45 minutes and were developed in the form of lectures, based on dialogue and exchange of knowledge. In each participating school, women were invited to form a single group, and the activity was carried out once in every school. As teaching resources verbal explanation of BSE issues and pap smear screening, and audiovisual resources, such as banner and tools for collecting Papanicolaou.

In the development of the activity it was first proceeded a brief explanation of the issues involved, with the help of educational resources developed for this purpose, and then there was open space to participation of women, who then could do their placements freely, by presenting their doubts or observations, or presenting testimony or clarifications. At this time, post-graduation courses and students made themselves available to answer questions, provide additional information and continue the arguments of the participants.

The night shift was selected as the appropriate time for development of the activity, since in this teaching period there

are women who make up the target population of the preventive activities of the breast and cervical cancer, namely women aged 25 to 64 years.²

For the development of this work, which is part of a larger study, we asked the opinion and approval of the Research Ethics Committee (CEP) of UFTM, being approved under the CEP / UFTM protocol: 2585.

RESULTS

A group of about 1040 students were benefited from the educational activities. It was observed that the mean age of the women was 24 years; many were not employed, since the majority of them were just students, and most of them also came from the municipality. The evidenced marital status during the talks was single. The reception of the 20 schools for which the activity was carried out was essential, since many directors considered the activity important and mentioned frequent problems related to women's health, such as the lack of knowledge related to CA diagnostic methods for breast and cervical cancer, early initiation of sexual activity, misuse of contraceptives and teenage pregnancy.

During the completion of the proposed work, it was notorious the lack of information related to the theme, as well as other related issues such as contraception

and sexually transmitted diseases. It was observed that, in a general context, women had greater knowledge deficit regarding the BSE in relation to pap smear screening, as evidenced by the volume of questions raised on the subject.

Regarding the BSE, the main questions related to the difference between benign and malignant nodules, age to start BSE, difference between BSE and mammography, risk and protective factors, and the main signs and symptoms of breast CA. It was noticed that many women mistakenly associated BSE with early diagnosis.

It was also observed that although women stated knowing the BSE, little was known about the practice and the start of realization. Moreover, many of them confused it as a synonym of mammography. Overall, it was noted that the theme breast CA caused more discomfort and fear in participants.

Regarding to Papanicolaou, it was noticed that many of them knew the purpose and timing of the examination, but it was great the number of women who confused when to start the exam, then, not looking for health services at the right time. Although many had already heard about the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), they were unaware of its relation with the cervical CA. A frequent question among the students was related to immunization

against HPV and its effectiveness.

In general, principals, teachers and students have shown their satisfaction with the activities. Women expressed interest in the affairs presented, since they actively participated in the proposed activity.

DISCUSSION

Breast cancer as detected at an early stage has a favorable prognosis, with the use of more effective and less aggressive therapies. For this to happen it is necessary to implement strategies for early diagnosis of breast CA through women's education for the recognition of characteristic signs and symptoms of disease, as well as easier access to the health services.⁷

During the achievement of educational activities it was observed that many women associated BSE with early diagnosis, which is a mistake. In this context, a study carried out in Uberaba / MG (2013), found that most of the study participants showed ignorance concerning the purpose of the breast self-examination (AEM), and 52.5% of them reported that AEM enables you to locate nodes early and 31.5%, that this is a screening test against breast CA.⁸

Data from 2013 provided by INCA indicate that most women with breast CA diagnostic identifies it by occasional

palpation of the breasts, and not from the practice of BSE. Thus, currently, the strategy used is the '*breast awareness*' which means to be alert to the breast health.^{7,9} We must highlight the difference between AEM and BSE, being AEM a propedeutic strategy, which includes defined technic and periodicity; and BSE a conscious attitude of attention to the general condition of the breasts without, however, the observance of technical rigors for its application.⁷

The practice of BSE emphasizes the importance of early diagnosis in order to guide the female population about the normal changes of breasts at different times of life cycle and to disclose key signs and symptoms of CA, encouraging women to seek medical clarification, to participate in tracking actions and to undertake occasional self-examination breast without method and period established.^{7,9}

In this light, it is noted that both AEM and BSE are simple and important exams in self-knowledge and breast CA control action. In line with what was mentioned, a survey performed with users of a Family Health Unit, found that approximately 19.7% of AEM practitioners detect breast changes when performing the technique.¹⁰

With regards to Papanicolaou, according to the Brazilian guidelines, it should be performed in all women with

active sex life, especially those who are in the age group 25-64 years of age, defined as target population, every three years after two consecutive normal annual checkups. It is noteworthy that the cervical CA has a high potential for cure when diagnosed early, and the pap smear screening stands out as the main strategy in the mass screening.^{1,2}

With regard to the barriers found for Pap smears screening, a work developed in São Paulo / SP (2008) pointed out that, of the 41 teenagers who never have the examination, 26.8% said they did not do so due to fear and 19.5 % due to embarrassment.¹¹ It is also emphasized the study developed in Toledo / PR (2009), in which the authors showed that women's knowledge about the pap smear screening (Papanicolaou) was superficial and erroneous, being that many women perform the examination more due to the healing aspect than the preventive one, that is, believing that the examination, which is diagnostic, has the healing potential.¹²

Thus, it emphasizes the need to expand information through health education campaigns, emphasizing the timing of realization of Pap tests and BSE, and to rethink the teaching methodologies aiming to greater adherence to the examination and hence reduction in mortality from related causes.^{11,13} It is

worth noting the importance of realization and integration of health activities in the school and social context.¹⁴

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It reinforces the importance of health education for women to acquire knowledge and become information officers, aimed at health promotion and the encouragement of self-care. Thus, it points out the need to develop strategies and programs to encourage the reduction of the number of cases of that grievance mentioned, awakening in women the interest to achieve the CA screening tests for breast and cervix. It is considered that the educational activity generated a positive educational impact since most of the students showed interest in continuing it, seeking to exchange experiences and education on issues related to the theme.

The main limitation of this study was the fact that the activity was timely and developed only once in each school, a fact that undermines the broader and deeper exploration of the topic. However, there is prospect of continuity as a proposal of university extension program of the Graduate Center for Nursing, UFTM, to be developed in partnership with the State Bureau of Education in the city, an initiative that will contribute to the dissemination of the recommendations of

the Ministry of Health and INCA about the control of cervical and breast cancer, as well as ensure the nursing students skills development in the field of health education.

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