### Abstract

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women and can cause mortality. Despite its many known risk factors, little primary prevention can be done, and consequently, there is a lot of emphasis on early detection. There are three methods for early detection of breast cancer: breast self-examination (BSE), physical exam and mammography; amongst, BSE is the easiest. Thus, we decided to conduct a study about the knowledge and attitude toward breast self-examination among the students of Al’zahra university, Iran.

### Methods

This was a cross-sectional study with simple random sampling in which 135 female students aged 18 to 26 years were enrolled. Data was collected by 3 separate questionnaires about demographics, knowledge and attitude.

### Results

Most of the students (45.9%) had "average" knowledge about BSE. Married students had significantly more knowledge (p<0.007). Most of the students (68.1%) had "positive" attitude about BSE. Older students, married students, and students with a positive history of breast cancer had slightly more positives attitudes. The most popular way of gaining information among students was mass media. Students who gained information from the university books had significantly (P<0.001) more knowledge than others, and those who gained information from mass media had more positive attitudes than others (P<0.04). Also, students with more knowledge had significantly more attitude (P<0.001).

### Conclusion

The knowledge and attitude about BSE in less than satisfactory among Al’zahra university students and probably even less than this among the general female population in Iran. Proper and more intense educational programs should be scheduled about BSE for women in Iran.

### Key Words:

Knowledge, Attitude, Al’zahra University, Breast self examination