prevention and screening

1364P SPANISH WOMEN’S PERCEPTIONS OF MAMMOGRAPHY SCREENING

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Aim: Participants in breast cancer screening programmes may benefit from early detection but may also be exposed to the risks of overdiagnosis and false positives. Women usually accept the invitation to participate in screening programmes, yet receive little information, with most women deciding to participate on the basis of convenience, gratitude or trust in the welfare state, rather than on the basis of a benefit-risk assessment. We surveyed a sample of Spanish women to assess knowledge, information sources, attitudes and psychosocial impact.

Methods: 434 breast cancer screening programme participants aged 45-69 years were administered questionnaires regarding knowledge, information sources, attitudes and psychosocial impact. Scores of 5 or more (out of 10) and 12 or more (out of 24) were established as indicating adequate knowledge and a positive attitude, respectively. Psychosocial impact was measured using the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale and the Cancer Worry Scale.

Results: Only 42 women (9.7%) had adequate knowledge. The mean knowledge score was 2.97 (1.16). Women with compared to women without experience of false positives were less knowledgeable (RR, 0.21 (0.05-0.90); P = 0.03). Better educated compared to minimally educated women were more knowledgeable (RR, 3.33 (1.68-6.62); P = 0.001). Employed, unemployed and retired women were more knowledgeable than homemakers (RR, 2.15 (1.05-4.41); P = 0.03). Only previous false positives and education level were significant in the multivariate model. The main sources of information were television, press, Andalusian Health Service documentation and family and friends. Most participants (99.1%) had a positive attitude, with a mean score of 3.21 (2.66). Mean anxiety, depression and cancer worry scores were 1.86 (3.26), 0.72 (1.99) and 9.4 (3.04).

Conclusions: Spanish women have a very positive attitude to breast cancer screening, but are poorly informed and use television as their main information source. They experience no negative psychosocial impact from participation in breast cancer screening programmes. Improving the information provided to women in the interest of informed decision making should be prioritized.

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