

# Knowledge and practice about breast self examination in women who referred to Babol health centers, Mazandaran, Iran

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** One third of all women's cancers are breast cancer. It is estimated that using screening methods causes 30% decrease in death rates due to breast cancer in over 50 years old women. The best method of screening at present is breast self examination (BSE) and mammography. The aim of this study was to investigate knowledge and practice of 20-60 years old women in Babol about breast self examination.

**Methods:** In this descriptive and analytic study, 160 females of 20-60 years old age, were randomly selected. Data was collected using a pre-designed questionnaire and observations. For data analysis, descriptive statistics and Chi-Square statistical test were used.

**Results:** The findings revealed a weak women's knowledge and practice on breast self examination (55.6% and 66.9%, respectively). Women's knowledge was significantly related to age ( $P < 0.001$ ), job ( $P < 0.001$ ), living place ( $P < 0.025$ ), and previous breast examinations ( $P < 0.001$ ), but there were not a significant relationships with education and information resources. Women's practice had significant relationship with previous breast examinations ( $P < 0.001$ ). There was also a significant linear relationship between women's knowledge and practice ( $P < 0.005$ ).

**Conclusion:** The obtained results recommend teaching programs about breast self examination for all age groups to promote women's health.

**Key words:** Breast – Breast Self - Examination – Knowledge – Babol

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