Awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms in general population

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Objectives:

Ovarian cancer accounts for 3% of all female cancers and has a high mortality rate among gynecological malignancies. Early diagnosis carries a high survival rate of 93%. So, this study was carried out to assess the knowledge and awareness of Jordanian women about ovarian cancer symptoms and risk factors.

Methods:

A cross-sectional survey design was used. women randomly selected to complete the survey, 896 women completed the survey

Results

The mean of total symptoms recognized was low at level of 3.2(SD = 2.7) out of 10. The three highest known symptoms among women were as follows: extreme fatigue (43.2%), back pain (42.4%), and persistent pain in pelvic area (40.7%). The most commonly known risk factor was smoking (68.4%), followed by having ovarian cyst(s) (59.7%)

Conclusions:

Poor awareness of ovarian cancer risk factors and symptoms were noticed. awareness need to be raised through education and social media. The absence of an effective screening program, a national awareness campaign is urgently needed to improve the public’s understanding of symptoms and risk factors and increasing women’s confidence in symptom recognition

Table 1. Sample Demographics.

Variable	Frequency (%)	M (SD)
Age		40.5 (13.9)
Marital status		
Single	181 (20.2)	
Married	618 (69.0)	
Divorce or widow	89 (9.9)	
Not mentioned	8 (0.9)	
Education		
Low education (secondary school and below)	399 (44.5)	
High education (diploma and above)	497 (55.5)	
Family income		
< 1000 JD	751 (83.8)	
≥ 1000 JD	145 (16.2)	
Work status		
Full-time Job	705 (78.7)	
Not working or retired	191 (21.3)	
Knowledge of person with cancer		
Yes	47 (5.3)	
No	849 (94.7)	
Living region		
Central	475 (53.1)	
Northern	270 (30.1)	
Southern	208 (16.8)	

Note. JD = Jordanian Dinar.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Women Knowledge of Ovarian Cancer Symptoms.

Symptom	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. Persistent pain in your abdomen	334	37.3	562	62.7
2. Persistent pain in your pelvis	365	40.7	531	59.3
3. Persistent bloating	250	27.9	646	72.15
4. Increased abdominal size on most days	337	37.6	559	62.4
5. Feeling full persistently	132	14.7	764	85.3
6. Difficulty eating on most days	114	12.7	782	87.3
7. Passing more urine than usual	267	29.8	629	70.2
8. Changes in bowel habit	282	31.5	614	68.5
9. Extreme fatigue	387	43.2	509	56.8
10. Back pain	380	42.4	516	57.6

Table 3. Frequency and Percentage of Women Knowledge of Ovarian Cancer Risk Factors.

Risk factor	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1. Having a close relative with ovarian cancer	380	42.4	516	57.6
2. Having a past history of breast cancer	418	46.7	478	53.3
3. Using HRT	401	44.8	495	55.2
4. Being overweight (BMI over 25)	345	38.5	551	61.5
5. Having endometriosis	341	38.1	555	61.9
6. Having ovarian cysts	535	59.7	361	40.3
7. Using talcum powder in the genital area	254	28.3	642	71.7
8. Being over 50 years old	370	41.3	526	58.7
9. Having IVF treatment	255	28.5	641	71.5
10. Not having children	302	33.7	594	66.3
11. Having gone through the menopause	411	45.9	485	54.1
12. Being a smoker	613	68.4	283	31.6

Note. HRT = hormone replacement therapy; BMI = body mass index; IVF = in vitro fertilization.

Table 4. Independent t-Test Results Analyzing the Difference in Mean Total Risk Factors Score Between Two Groups.

Variable	M (SD)	t	p value	95% CI of the difference
Education level		-3.96	<.001*	[-1.69, -0.36]
Low educated	4.8 (2.7)			
Highly educated	5.5 (2.8)			
Knowing women with ovarian cancer		0.31	0.756	[-1.15, 1.58]
Yes	5.4 (2.7)			
No	5.2 (2.8)			
Waiting time to seek medical care		-0.04	0.966	[-0.45, 0.44]
≤2 weeks	5.2 (2.8)			
>2 weeks	5.2 (2.6)			
Family monthly income		-2.84	0.005*	[-1.20, -0.22]
Low (≤ 1000 JD)	5.0 (2.7)			
High (> 1000 JD)	5.8 (2.9)			
Aware of the presence of the national breast cancer screening program		4.60	<.001*	[0.69, 1.73]
Yes	5.3 (2.7)			
No	4.1 (2.8)			

Note. CI = confidence interval; JD = Jordanian Dinar.

*Significant difference in mean of total number of recognized risk factors between the compared groups.