The awareness and attitudes of women toward breast cancer risk factors and prevention methods

Introduction and purpose:
Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death after lung cancer. Several risk factors play a role in breast cancer which some of them are changeable or some other ones are unchangeable, either. The awareness of people from the breast cancer risk factors and prevention methods can be an effective step in the reduction of this disease. Therefore, this study aimed to assess the knowledge and attitudes of women about breast cancer risk factors and prevention methods.

Methods: The present study is a descriptive cross-sectional which was measured Women's knowledge and attitude about breast cancer risk factors and its prevention methods by using a questionnaire. On 386 patients referred to a breast specialized center in Rasht in 2012, the obtained information was analyzed by statistical software spss and t-test, ANOVA, and Chi-square tests. A p-value < 0.05 was considered to be statistically significant. Results: The mean age was 30/41 ± 8/58 which 271 (70/2%) people were married. 181 (46/4%) studied patients were university-educated. 33 patients of this group (12/5%) used hormonal methods of contraception and (57/3%) 221 patients believed that family history of breast cancer is a risk factor. In addition, (37/6%) 145 patients believed that contraceptive hormonal pills are not the risk factors for breast cancer. There was no significant statistical association between the awareness of patients about breast cancer risk factors and variables (age-marital status) (P>0/05). However, it was observed the significant statistical association between the awareness and the education (P<0/05). Conclusion: Some controllable risk factors for breast cancer such as obesity, high-fat foods, smoking, alcohol and hormonal drugs are related to the lifestyle of people. Doctors and Midwives can be helpful by increasing the level of patients' awareness and attitude about improving their lifestyle, such as physical exercise - weight loss - improved nutrition as well as by holding cancer prevention programs such as: BSE (breast self-examination) Training and Recommending the examination by a doctor. Mammography is a crucial step in the prevention and reduction of breast cancer.

Key words: Awareness, breast self-examination, breast cancer, mammography.