Assessing the correlates of the knowledge and attitudes to cervical cancer screening among women aged 21 to 65 years old in Central Beirut: **A Cross Sectional Study**

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Introduction

Cervical cancer is a significant global public health problem, contributing to 600,000 incident and 300,000 mortality cases every year.[1] In Lebanon,, cervical cancer is the 11th most common cancer among women and there exist many factors that modify the perception, attitudes, and behaviors of undertaking and adhering to the necessary measures of screening for cervical cancer . [2,3]

Rationale

Few studies have assessed the knowledge and attitudes of Lebanese women towards cervical cancer screening, however, there have been no studies that have focused on assessing the **correlates** of the knowledge and attitudes of women to the cervical cancer screening protocols in Lebanon.

Objectives

- Assess the knowledge and attitudes of women aged 21 to 65 years of age in Central Beirut to cervical cancer screening.
- Assess the correlates of the knowledge and attitudes of the women aged 21 to 65 years of age central Beirut to cervical cancer screening.

Methodology

Sampling and Recruitment:

- A total of 232 women were approached at the beginning of the study from 5 primary health centers.
- Inclusion criteria:
  1. Lebanese nationality
  2. 21 to 65 years old
  3. No previous cervical cancer diagnosis

Measurements:

The data was collected using a 10-15-minute structured telephone- based questionnaire with a total of 200 women that generally assessed their sociodemographic characteristics and Pap smear knowledge and attitude levels.

Methodology

Validity and Reliability:
The questions were extracted from a diversity of previous articles conducted in countries like Iran and Saudi Arabia, which worked on validating each item through a group of experts like gynecologists and health educators. The reliability was tested using test-re-test.

Outcome calculation:

- 14 knowledge items were graded over 14 to make up the knowledge score.
- 10 attitude items were graded over 30 to make up the attitude score.
- Both of the scores were added together to produce an awareness score that was converted to over 100 for ease of variable understanding.

Ethical Considerations:
- An oral informed consent was sought.
- A written informed consent was sent.
- An information sheet about Pap smears was sent.
- The participation to the telephone interview was completely voluntary.

Results: Descriptive findings

	Mean	SD	Median
Attitude score (over 30)	22.87	4.57	23
Knowledge score (over 14)	8.64	2.612	9
Awareness score = Attitude + Knowledge (over 100)	71.61	13.83	72.73

Average awareness score of women aged 21 to 65 years old by socioeconomic characteristics
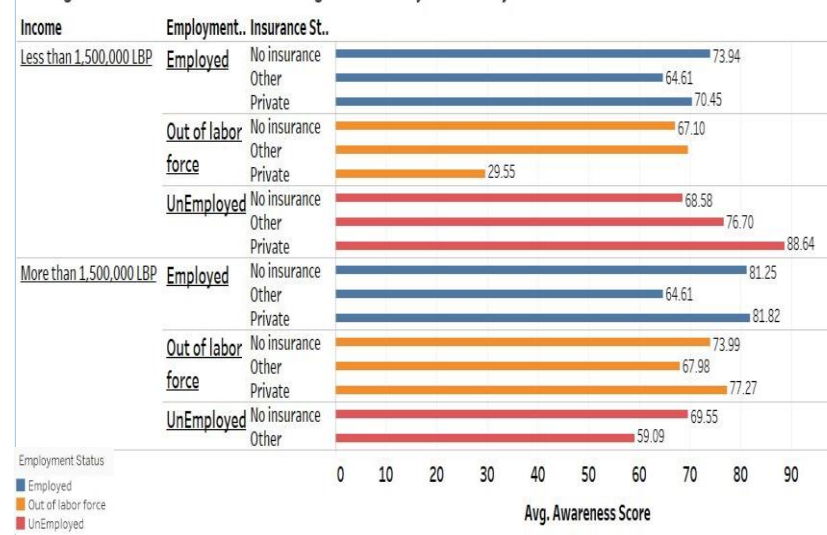
Results: Multiple Regression Model

	Coefficient (adjusted)	P-value
Age		
21 to 29 years old	Ref	
30 to 39 years old	-3.27	0.46
40 to 49 years old	-4.66	0.29
50 to 65 years old	3.74	0.28
Education		
Low education level	Ref	
Moderate education level	2.45	0.37
High education level	4.68	0.04*
Monthly Household Income		
Less than 1,500,000 LBP	Ref	
More than 1,500,000 LBP	1.67	0.275
Employment Status		
Outside the labor force (student/retired)	Ref	
Employed	2.52	0.34
Unemployed	2.72	0.23
Insurance status		
No	Ref	
Private insurance	4.78	0.27
Other	-3.51	0.29

Discussion & Recommendations

- The sample had high awareness to Pap smears with respect to other studies.
- The main correlates of the awareness to the Pap smears are related to the socioeconomic factors of the women.
- Educational approaches are needed to be made targeted to the women while taking into consideration the health and social communication strategies (inexpensive and reachable methods).
- More evaluation studies need to be prioritized in order to understand measures of improvement and what could be done better and differently to optimize awareness levels regarding Pap smear tests.

Limitations

- Telephone surveys may have increased the likelihood of having social desirability bias.
- The study was conducted in times of multiple crises happening in Lebanon, which all might have affected the results of the study.
- This study was low on resources, hence causing it to be restricted with a certain number of participants to be included in the study.

References

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