

The Prevalence of Risk Factors among Women Diagnosed with Breast Cancer

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Background: Breast cancer is a leading cause of death among women. Certain factors are associated with breast cancer.

Objectives: To estimate the prevalence of selected risk factors for breast cancer in female patients attending Salmaniya Medical Complex (Oncology Clinic). To identify the stage and size of the tumor at which the cancer is first diagnosed.

Methods: Ninety-three breast cancer patients attending the Oncology clinic during the month of January 1995 were interviewed. Information obtained included personal characteristics, diagnostic criteria, menstrual history, Obstetric and Gynecology history and history of cancer. Information was analyzed by "Excess" computer package.

Results: Most cases were in the age group 41-60 years. The age at menarche in 76% of study population was at or below 13 years. The age of natural menopause was between 41-50 years. The average size of the tumor was 5.5 cm. Eighty percent of women reported breast-feeding their children. Sixty percent of the patients have never used oral contraceptive pills in their lives. Only 8 cases (9%) had positive family history of breast cancer. Fifteen percent had their first full term pregnancy above 35 years of age.

Conclusion: In this study 53% of patients were between 41-60 years. The majority of patients were married and multiparous. Eighty percent of patients breast-fed their offspring more than one year and 60% never used oral contraceptive pills. The size of tumor at presentation was smaller among women with high level of education compared to those with low level of education.