BioSpectrum
the business of Bi
24 years of leveraging the business of Bio
www.biospectrumindia.co

75% Indian Women shy away from Breast Cancer Screening

09 October 2018 | Features

Overall awareness about breast cancer lies at 86% while 50% of the women feel that they are at risk of breast cancer.



Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Pvt Ltd (FGILI), in association with Momspresso unveiled the findings of a national survey which aims at understanding the awareness around breast cancer among Indian women. Breast cancer is currently one of the most common cancers affecting women in India. In fact, one fourth of all female cancer cases recorded in India are breast cancer. In sight of the Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM), FGILI, one of the fastest growing life insurance companies & Momspresso, India's largest user –generated content platform for women, conducted a survey to encourage conversations among women and increase awareness on the underlying symptoms associated with breast cancer. It is essential that women know the most common symptoms associated with breast cancer, such as lumps and thickenings, and understand that prompt evaluation and early detection improves outcome. This survey was conducted with a sample size of 2225 respondents across 10 key metro cities.

High Awareness of breast cancer

The incidence of breast cancer in India is not rare. According to the 'Breast Cancer Awareness Survey', almost 86% Indian women are well aware of this fact. 60% women claim to know about the incidence of breast cancer in the country. In fact, 1 out of 2 women, felt that they were at risk for breast cancer. The survey was conducted amongst women across urban Indian cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Bhopal and Chandigarh.

Lack of importance given to breast screening

As per the findings of the Breast Cancer Awareness survey, a major chunk of the respondents felt that they did not require screening while a significant number revealed that they were not aware about the existence of screening tests for breast cancer. Additionally, respondents also revealed that they were too lazy or felt that they were too young to undergo screening for the disease.

- 80% of the respondents know that they need to get regular check-ups for breast cancer. Whereas, only 25% women have gone through screening for the ailment
- Almost 75% of the respondents did not undergo screening for breast cancer due to ignorance or inertia

Lack of knowledge on breast cancer examination

More than half of the respondents were not aware of the age at which regular screening or examination for the disease should begin. The survey reveals that 2 out of 3 women were unaware of the simple self-examination that can help them detect the disease at an early stage. While 65% of the respondents had not heard about mammography as a screening test for breast cancer, a whopping 80% did not have the slightest idea about clinical breast examination.

Women uncomfortable about speaking about breast cancer

Uncovering an important factor that contributes the lack of awareness around breast cancer and its treatments, the survey found that around 60% of women are not comfortable speaking about the disease with their friends and family.

Extremely poor understanding of different types of cancer

The survey found that around 70% of the respondents were unaware of the different treatments for cancer. Chemotherapy, in fact, was the only type of treatment that most respondents could recall.

The study also found almost 12% of the respondents themselves were suffering or had suffered from breast cancer. Of these breast cancer fighters, a major chunk cited pain and discomfort in the breasts, change in shape and size of breasts and lumps as the top 3 most commonly experienced symptoms of the disease.

Need of financial preparedness for the treatment

Future Generali India Life Insurance & Mompresso further aimed to find out how much Indian women know about the financial aspects pertaining to breast cancer treatments. While treatment costs can range between INR 2.5 lakhs to 20 lakhs, around 50% of the respondents perceived the cost to be less than INR 2 lakhs. Since the awareness about treatments costs was so low, it comes as no surprise that around 72% respondents had no information about breast cancer specific insurance plans.

Commenting on the survey, **Rakesh Wadhwa, Chief Marketing Officer of Future Generali India Life Insurance Company Pvt Ltd** said, "*October internationally is dedicated towards raising awareness towards breast cancer and hence we commissioned this survey to bring forth the current awareness levels amongst Indian women around breast cancer and its repercussions. While this research points out high awareness of breast cancer, it is the lack of action or the inertia that results into detecting breast cancer in its early stages. As an insurer, we believe we have an important role to play in addressing the*

topic of awareness of breast cancer and its financial implications. This will help women be better financially prepared in case of an uncertainty.

An important factor that contributes to the lack of awareness around breast cancer and its treatments is that 60% of women are not comfortable speaking about the illness with their friends and family. It therefore becomes imperative to increase and encourage open conversations on and about breast cancer."

Speaking on the findings, **Vishal Gupta, Co-founder & CEO of Momspresso** said, "*Our objective to conduct the first-of-its kind survey was empowering women with knowledge and fostering a conversation on breast cancer awareness and symptoms. Through the study we found out that the awareness around breast cancer treatments and costs is largely scattered. Women across the country have limited knowledge about what the disease entails in terms of screening, treatment and cost. We are glad we carried out this survey in tandem with Future Generali, as we share the same objective of creating awareness in women towards a healthier and happier life. Momspresso, through its repository of over 8000 mommy bloggers who write on varied topics, will disseminate more information about breast cancer and its implications. Raising awareness among Indian moms will definitely be our next natural progression in order to significantly lower the number of lives that this disease claims per year*."

While all these findings point towards a stark gap in the knowledge pertaining to breast cancer, they also present a unique opportunity for brands and platforms to raise awareness and arm women with the knowledge required to prepare for and eventually beat this rampant disease.