

Awareness of Rural Population on Warning Signs of Cancer: A Descriptive Cross-sectional Study

VANITA THAKUR¹, VINAY KUMARI², MUSKAN MALIK³, MUSKAN SAINI⁴, MUSKANDEEP KAUR⁵, NANCY⁶, JYOTI SARIN⁷

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cancer is a major global public health challenge and also a leading cause of morbidity and mortality worldwide. Cancer consequences are better if diagnosis is made at initial stages as it lessens delays across the diagnostic pathway. Awareness about any ailment has a vital role in the early diagnosis.

Aim: To assess the level of awareness on cancer warning signs among the general population and to determine the factors associated with awareness.

Materials and Methods: A quantitative, descriptive cross sectional research design was used. Cancer Awareness Measure (CAM) scale consisting of open (recall) and closed (recognition) questions was used to collect data from adults residing in rural areas of Ambala, Haryana. Data was analysed using SPSS version 20.

Results: The study showed that the overall awareness of participants was low. The overall mean awareness score was 6.04 ± 3.55 out of

24. Open (recall) awareness of cancer warning signs was very low as the mean awareness score was 1.91 ± 1.60 out of 15. In contrast, participants exhibited somewhat higher awareness on closed (recognition) questions as the mean score was 4.13 ± 2.58 out of 9. Age, education level, socio economic status, previous information regarding cancer warning signs showed statistically significant associations with level of awareness ($p \leq 0.05$).

Conclusion: The study reveals inadequate awareness related to cancer warning signs among the population, as compared to recognition-based awareness. Awareness regarding cancer warning signs can be improved through various educational programmes, primary healthcare services and mass media to promote early detection and reduce cancer-related morbidity and mortality.

Keywords: Cancer awareness measure, Cancer warning signs, Rural population.

PARTICULARS OF CONTRIBUTORS:

1. Nursing Tutor, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.
2. Vice Principal cum Professor, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.
3. Student, B.Sc. Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.
4. Student, B.Sc. Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.
5. Student, B.Sc. Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.
6. Student, B.Sc. Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.
7. Principal cum Professor, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala, Haryana, India.

NAME, ADDRESS, E-MAIL ID OF THE CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Dr. Vinay Kumari,
Vice Principal cum Professor, Maharishi Markandeshwar College of Nursing, Maharishi Markandeshwar (Deemed to be University), Mullana, Ambala-133207, Haryana, India.
Email: vinaykpatil03@gmail.com