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### **ABSTRACT**

Registered nurses's performance and teaching of breast self- examination (BSE) to female clients was explored in a hospital setting. A systematic random sample of 30 Hong Kong female registered nurses aged 20 to 59 who worked in the obstetric unit were surveyed. A self- report questionnaire developed by Lea Budden (1996 ) with minor modifications had been distributed to the potential subjects for data collection. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. 27 subjects participated in the study yielding a response rate of 90%. 70% ( n=19 ) participants reported performing BSE in the preceding 12 months. However, only 6 out of these 19 performers (22%) had performed BSE monthly. The major reasons for not performing monthly BSE was " forgetfulness " ( n=5 ) and " not necessary " ( n=5 ). Although 22 out of 27 subjects expressed confidence in teaching BSE, only 6 of them belong to the teaching group. Amongst the non-teaching group ( n=21 ), the major reasons cited were " it was not appropriate in the work context " and " it was not their responsibility " although 16 of them are confident in teaching BSE. Moreover, 4 of them commented that they would not teach BSE even if they had the opportunity; one cited the reason that "BSE was not an effective method for screening breast cancer"; two stated that " teaching BSE was not their responsibility "; and the other subject failed to give any explanation. Despite the fact that many of them had already received BSE information from their bachelor of nursing courses, they expressed that further training was necessary before they could teach this skill to clients. The implications of this study are that number of nurses' teaching BSE technique to clients may be increased if more emphasis was put on BSE in basic and post- basic nursing training. Also, continuing education should be provided to nurses to increase their knowledge, confidence, performance, and teaching of BSE. Most importantly, institutional support in the form of resources and cultivation of a positive culture in the workplace is crucial.