

Title: Hong Kong Chinese women's knowledge of osteoporosis

ABSTRACT

Osteoporosis is a serious public health problem because it affects half of the postmenopausal women in Hong Kong, and death can be its complication (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1999). Although it is serious, many women may lack in the knowledge about it. Preventive measures including education can reduce the complications related to osteoporosis. Therefore, the first step to prevent women from osteoporosis should be making them aware of its risk factors and preventive strategies. To be effective, women's knowledge of osteoporosis should be assessed before education (Ungan & Tumer, 1999).

The aim of this study was to assess the public Hong Kong Chinese women's knowledge of osteoporosis. This was a quantitative, descriptive study in a non-experimental survey method. Convenience sampling was used, and 82 Hong Kong Chinese women were recruited from a local community centre and an old people's centre. An instrument, which questions are related to the knowledge about the prevalence, risk factors, prevention, treatment and complications of osteoporosis, was used. All data were collected through face-to-face administration. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data and find out the relationships between the women's knowledge of osteoporosis and the demographic variables.

The result of this study showed that more than 50% of the participants could not give the right answers for 14 out of 22 items on the questionnaire, and these items were concerning about prevalence; risk factors such as smoking, alcohol abuse, heredity, race, body-build; prevention; treatment and complications of osteoporosis. Nearly 90% of the women surveyed did not know the amount of calcium that young women need, and more than 80% had no knowledge about the risk factors as heredity and body-build. This study also found out that young women, pre-menopausal women and women who had fractures due to minimal trauma were less knowledgeable, but women who had received previous information about osteoporosis were more knowledgeable.

According to this survey, the majority of the Hong Kong Chinese women in the community centre and the old people's centre had inadequate knowledge about osteoporosis. Since nurses are health care professionals, they should help to prevent osteoporosis by increasing the public women's knowledge through education. Young women, pre-menopausal women, and women who had fractures due to minimal trauma should be the target groups for education. Since this study showed that information could increase women's knowledge, nurses should not miss any chance to provide information of osteoporosis to public women by using different resources.