

Filipino-American Women's Health Study

P.I. Annette Maxwell, Dr.P.H.

Project Director: Jing Vida

Mammography and Cervical Cancer Screening Curriculum

I. Introduction

Thank you for coming to the educational session today. Dr. (or Ms.) _____ will conduct the sessions. *Give some background on health professional.*

PURPOSE: We seek to provide information on two of the most important health issues for women: Breast and cervical cancer and discuss some of your concerns.

IMPORTANCE: Breast cancer is the No. 1 cancer killer among women. In the US, one in 8 women will develop the disease. In general, it is the commonest cancer and most common cause of deaths in women. It's the leading cause of death for women ages 35 to 54 and the 2nd leading cause of death for women ages 55 to 74. 183,000 women will get breast cancer this year and about 44,000 will die of it.

CERVICAL CANCER, on the other hand, is potentially the most preventable cancer and unlike other cancers, it is potentially easily detectable.

You may think that mostly white women get cancer and that it is very rare among Filipino women. That is not true. Cancer rates are increasing among Filipino women who are living in the U.S. The longer you have been living here, the higher is your risk.

GOAL: To increase testing for cervical cancer and breast cancer among Filipino women. Before we begin, we need to record the session and we'd like you to sign the consent form. This form says that you are volunteering to participate and that everything that is discussed here will remain confidential.

- Everything you have to say is important.
- There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinions.
- Everything said in here today is confidential.
- Please introduce yourself to everyone.

II. Breast Cancer

I.

How many of you know someone who has or who has had breast cancer?

For many women, breast cancer may be the most familiar and the most frightening of all cancers. As we get older, we may have more and more friends dealing with breast cancer and we may have to deal with it ourselves.

The risk of developing breast cancer increases as we get older. But there is hope. There are tests and modern technology today to detect breast cancer at its early stages. Thanks to these advances, more than half of women with breast cancer can live as long as their friends who do not have the disease.

III. Mammography

Can someone tell me the name of the test used to screen for breast cancer?

Can someone explain what a mammogram is?

Definition:

A mammogram is an x-ray picture of the breast. The picture is taken to see if there is a suspicious lump in your breast that you and your doctor may not be able to feel or see. If a mammogram shows a lump in the breast a doctor will probably want to take a sample to determine if the lump is cancerous.

(pass out brochures here and show women the picture of woman who is getting a mammogram).

A mammogram can find a cancer up to 2 years before a lump can be felt.

(Visual Presentation: size of cancer found in mammogram vs. BSE)

The following 2 questions are optional to help the discussion going. Feel the group's tone. We'd like them to discuss their own experiences.

- How many of you have had a mammogram or breast x-ray?
- How many of you know someone who has had a mammogram?

For those of you who have had a mammogram, can you describe the process for the group?

How was it? (uncomfortable, embarrassing, painful)

Why did you have one?

For those of you who have not had a mammogram, can you tell us why?

Do you think a mammogram is needed? Why or Why not?

Finally, how often do you think a woman should get a mammogram?

These are the medical recommendations today. A woman at age 35 should have a baseline mammogram. If you're 40 years and older, you should have a mammogram yearly.

As a nurse, doctor or cancer survivor, make a strong recommendation here for the women to get a mammogram.

IV. Cervical cancer

Now we want to change our topic of discussion to cervical cancer. *Explain location of the cervix using the picture, e.g. the cervix is the lower and narrow end of the uterus).*

Cancer, especially cervical cancer, is not something that is readily discussed in our culture and it may also go undiagnosed. Do any of you know someone who has or who has had cervical cancer?

Like breast cancer, many older women get cervical cancer. Two-thirds of all cervical cancers are detected in women 40 years of age and older. Like we said earlier, cervical cancer is one of the easiest to detect. Studies found that deaths from cervical cancer have decreased dramatically in areas or among cultures where there are screening programs available and are well participated in. In California, almost 90% of white women get screened for cervical cancer on a regular basis, but only about 70% of Asian women.

V. Pap Tests

Who can tell me the name of the test used to find cervical cancer?

Can someone explain what a Pap smear or Pap test is?

Definition:

A Pap test is when a doctor takes a small sample of cells from the cervix. During the test, an instrument is inserted into the vagina so the doctor can see the cervix and take a sample of the cells.

(Pass out brochures and show women the process of getting a pap test)

The following two questions are optional.

- How many of you have had a Pap test?
- How many of you know someone who has had a Pap test?

For those of you who have had a Pap test, can you describe the process for the group?

What was it like?

For those of you who have not had a Pap test, can you tell us why you decided not to have one?

For those of you who have had a Pap test, can you tell us why you decided to have a pap test?

Do you think a pap test is needed ? Why or Why not?

How often do you think a woman should get a pap test?

Unless you and your doctor decide differently, you should get a pap test every year.

Make a strong recommendation here for the women to get a Pap test yearly.

VI. Barriers to Screening

Some of you already told us why you did not get screened for breast and cervical cancer or why you don't do it on a regular basis, once a year.

Because these concerns are very important, I would like to go over them one by one. These are concerns that women often have: *(put on flip chart)*

Cost:

There are clinics that are low-cost or you may qualify for a free mammogram and Pap test. We have compiled information on low cost and free facilities for you. *(Distribute and explain provider directory)*. PROVIDE INFO ON WHO QUALIFIES FOR BCCCP AND BCEDP) Reimbursement of mammograms and Pap tests by Medicare, Medicaid and most health insurance plans.

Fear of radiation (for mammogram only):

There's nothing to fear, it is only half of what you get from dental x-rays and only a fraction of what you get from the environment naturally over one year.

Concern about finding breast or cervical cancer:

Nowadays there are many drugs and therapies to fight cancer. The important thing is early detection while the cancer is confined to a small area in the breast or in the cervix. That's where the screening comes in. You may be nervous when you go for your screening test and concerned about finding cancer, but finding it early before you have any symptoms will guaranty the best chance for treatment and survival. That's why it is important to get screened yearly, even if you feel that you are healthy.

Pain:

In order to get a good picture, the breast has to be compressed, which can be uncomfortable or even painful. However, this will take only a few seconds, but you can be saving your life and your family grief.

Inconvenience of going to get the screening tests and lack of transportation:

If health is important to you, you can find ways, through your friends and family. They care about you, they'd help if it's something about your health. There are some organizations that exist that may drive older women to health facilities. (GET MORE DETAILS)

My doctor did not recommend these tests:

Has your doctor ever suggested that you have a mammogram or pap test? Sometimes, doctors just focus on the reason for your visit and they forget to recommend routine screening tests. It is your responsibility to ask your doctor about these tests to maintain your health.

Embarrassment:

You can always request a female practitioner. We must conquer the embarrassment if we care

about our bodies and ourselves. Our health is very important - more than anything.

Women do not need Pap tests if they are not sexually active

Women do not need Pap tests if they have had a hysterectomy

Women who have had a hysterectomy (surgery to remove the uterus, including the cervix) should ask their doctor's advice about having pelvic exams and Pap tests).

VII. Getting ready for a mammogram and a Pap test

To prepare for a mammogram

- Schedule your appointment soon after a menstrual period when breasts are not so tender
- Don't use any deodorant, perfume or powder under your arm or in the breast area. It can cloud the mammogram.
- Wear slacks or a skirt and a blouse since you will have to undress above the waist.

To prepare for a Pap test

- Schedule your appointment between 10 and 20 days after the first day of your menstrual period
- For about 2 days before a Pap test avoid douching, which may wash away or hide any abnormal cells.

VIII. Conclusions

Whether you feel healthy or not right now, if you're a woman, 40 and older, you are at risk for getting breast and cervical cancer. The older you get, the more you are at risk.

Mammography and the pap test are the best way to find cancer at an early treatable stage. If you believe that health is wealth, or *kalusugan ay kayamanan*, that's your only choice.

Prevent any cancerous cells from winning by getting screened regularly. We recommend that each year on your birthday you give yourself a gift. We will close this session by having you sign a pledge to yourself today that you will get a mammogram and Pap test this year and years to come as a gift to yourself, your friends and family.

Distribute certificates and have women sign it.

For more information call the cancer information service phone line at 1-800-4-CANCER

1/5/98



Y 1 5 3