Breast Cancer Awareness Survey

Importance
Breast cancer screening is an important topic for the majority of the interviewed women. Especially in Brazil almost all women indicate that breast cancer screening is very important. However, in the U.S. only about two thirds of the women consider breast cancer screening as very important.

Knowledge
The knowledge about breast cancer differs considerably among the countries. Overall, about 40% of the survey participants rate their knowledge as good or very good. Indian women feel the best informed – three out of four women state that their knowledge is good or very good, whereas in China, Russia, and Sweden, under one third of the women indicate to be well or very well informed about breast cancer screening.

Usage
Overall, approximately two out of three interviewed women have had a breast cancer screening. In Austria and Germany, the share is even higher – more than three quarters of the women state that they have had a screening. In China, Russia, India, and Sweden, slightly more than half of the women have had a screening.

Frequency
Overall, most respondents stated to have a breast cancer screening once a year. However in Sweden, most women indicate that they go to an examination every other year, and in Russia the majority of the women state that they go to a screening irregularly.

Personal experience
Breast cancer screenings are usually perceived as a positive or at least neutral experience. In Brazil and China the vast majority of the interviewed women indicate that their experience was positive. In Germany and Austria, women tend to describe their experience as rather neutral. The number of women who have had a negative experience is quite low among all countries.

Components of the screening/examination
According to the majority of the survey participants, a breast cancer screening examination includes a mammogram, a clinical breast examination, and a discussion with the physician.

Study design and methodology
Method: Online survey
Interview length: 15 minutes
Fully structured questionnaire (including 4 open-ended questions)
Target group: n = 500 women between 25–65 years of age per country
Scope: USA, Germany, Brazil, China, Russia, India, Sweden, Austria
Duration of field work: December 2010 – January 2011

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When thinking about breast cancer screening, the majority of the women associates the feeling of having done everything possible to prevent breast cancer. In Russia and especially in India, the fear of the results also plays an important role.

Overall, one third of the respondents state that they do not have any concerns which prevent them from seeking a breast cancer screening. Especially in Sweden, the share of women who have no concerns is quite high at 62%, whereas in India, many concerns are considered to limit the willingness to go to a breast cancer screening (e.g. doubts about the effectiveness, fear of complications, fear of the results). In China, many women are concerned about high costs and possible radiation.

Besides mammography/mammogram, which is by far the best known diagnostic method, ultrasound is also known by the surveyed women. Slightly less than one third state that they are familiar with MRI. In India, this method is known to half of the respondents.

The women reported to be mainly motivated to do a breast cancer screening after self-examination or because they belong to a risk group.

Overall, almost half of the survey participants are not aware of whether there is an official screening program in their country. Especially in Russia and in Austria, the awareness is quite low at 60%. The exception is India: Three quarters of the women believe that there is an official screening program in their country.

Overall, it is the gynecologist who is perceived as the most reliable person. The family physicians follow second. Particularly in Germany and in Austria, the gynecologist plays by far the most important role. In the U.S., the family physician is as important as the gynecologist. In India, the family physician is perceived even more reliable. Interestingly, in Sweden the gynecologist, the family physician, the governmental information center, and the governmental agency are perceived as equally trustworthy and almost one third indicates to not know which person is the most trustworthy.

Overall, approximately two thirds of the survey respondents are the most familiar with. In all countries, the gynecologist is rated as the most reliable information source – especially in Germany and Austria, more than 80% of the women state that the gynecologist is very trustworthy.

Overall, consultations with the physician, either prior or after the examination and informational material (e.g. pamphlet or online information), are the services the women are the most familiar with. Interestingly, in Sweden the consultations with the physicians are much less familiar to the women than in the other countries and almost half of the women indicate not knowing any of the services.

The most important services are the consultations with the physician, either preliminary to or after the examination.

Overall, more than three quarters of the respondents breast cancer screening is perceived as very important. Especially in Brazil almost all interviewed women state that breast cancer screening is of high importance.

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