



Magazine Awareness on Breast Cancer: Empowerment of Women for Social Economic Development

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Abstract

Mass media is an important tool for educating and disseminating information in the society through both electronic and print media. The reading of magazines has evolved as one of the modern activities which has captured the interest of elite women in Kenya. One of the factors that has contributed to the increase in the readership of magazines is the health content in them. This paper analyses the breast cancer awareness in selected consumer magazines as a factor in enhancing empowerment of women for social economic development. It assesses the effect of the health content in these magazines in empowering the women readers. The selected magazines for the study are, *The Parents'*, *True love* and newspaper pull-out magazines published in the month of October between 2005-2011. These magazines were purposively identified and the months of October was preferred because it is a breast cancer awareness months internationally. The objectives of the study are; to analyze what issues on Breast Cancer are discussed in the selected consumer magazines and to investigate whether information on Breast Cancer in these magazines help in demystifying the Breast Cancer by the elite women thereby empowering these women to participate fully in social economic development. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Purposive sampling, snowballing and stratified random techniques were used to select the sample. The accessible population was 346 participants, of which 30% a sample size of 102 working women in the Education sector; banking institutions, civil society, business women as well as civil servants. The study adopted a mixed method approach. Qualitative data was reached at through in-depth interviews of purposively sampled 10 key respondents and content analysis approaches were used in the analysis of health content in these magazines. The quantitative data involved filling of 92 questionnaires. This increased the credibility of the study. The quantitative data collected was sorted, classified and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques by use of SPSS program. Qualitative data was received in verbatim, audio recorded, transcribed and organized in themes and sub-themes. The study has found out that October consumer magazines had different issues on breast cancer discussed in different editions and the information in these magazines has shaped the readers opinion in making decisions pertaining breast cancer. Through these magazines, women are now aware of the disease; they are able to go for early checkups, they are able to breast examine themselves in case of any lumps and so seek for early treatment. These has enabled women to participate in nation building because they are empowered with knowledge on breast health and thus gained self-esteem to make choices. The paper argues that breast cancer awareness plays a major role in women empowerment socially, politically and economically and it is said a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. Women are able to cope with the disease in case they are infected or affected and so able to compete with men in nation building. Sustainable Development Goals vision 2030, goal three states to promote good health and well-being for all at all ages. These is what elite women are geared to in order to empower themselves socially, economically and politically. Good health and well-being brings about healthy mind and so this promotes motivation translating into economic, social and political empowerment.

Keywords: Consumer magazines, breast cancer awareness, women empowerment.

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Introduction

Magazines are periodical publications containing a collection of articles, stories, photographs and other features that appear on a regular basis. There are two categories of magazines; trade/specialized magazines and consumer magazines. Dominick (2009)

notes that consumer magazine is a glossy magazine that is aimed at the public. They are also referred to as 'glossies'. This is why more adverts are placed in it. They can be acquired by anyone, through a subscription or a single copy purchase or as a free copy.

According to Belch and Belch (2004), a consumer magazine is a glossy magazine that is aimed at a specified group of people. For instance, *Automobile magazines* which document issues on automobile industry and therefore target those interested in vehicle matters. *Cooking Light* magazine dwell on discussing

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recipes of different kinds of food. Consumer magazine is specialized in content and target a specific audience interested in their content. Therefore, a consumer magazine is one that can be acquired by anyone, through a subscription or a single copy purchase or as a free copy.

Baran (2004) says that media inform us, delight us, entertain us, educates us, investigates, as well as move our emotions, challenge our intellects, and insults our intelligence. Media helps to define and shape our realities. These have been propagated mostly by the magazines that are read by elite women. These women read information on breast cancer; they read about symptoms, self-breast examination, causes of breast cancer, treatment, as well as on mammogram. It is through the media that expected behavior is encouraged while unwanted behavior is discouraged Craig (2004). The media as an agent of socialization nurtures an individual into behaving in a manner that is acceptable in the society. Information obtained from these magazines on breast cancer encourages and therefore empowers women to participate in social-economic, political activities and carry on in nation building. As it is said, "information is power". Therefore magazines play a major role in shaping ones mental and physical growth as far as empowering women is concern. Knowledge is power, when women are empowered with knowledge, they are able to participate in economic, social and political spheres.

Women's empowerment refers to women gaining more power and control over their own lives. This entails the idea of women's continued disadvantage compared to men which is apparent in different economic, socio-cultural and political spheres. According to the UN Population Fund, a woman who is empowered has a sense of self-worth. She can determine her own choices, has access to opportunities as well as resources providing her with an array of options she can pursue. Empowered has control over her own life both within and outside the home and she has the ability to influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, both nationally and internationally. Empowering women is a pathway for achieving all Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs (WHO, 2015).

SDGs are a collection of 17 global goals set by the United Nations in 2015. It is also referred to as, "Global Goals for Sustainable Development". The goals are broad and somewhat interdependent, yet each has a separate list of targets to achieve. The SDGs cover social and economic development issues including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, urbanization, environment and social justice (SDGs UN, 2015). Goal 3 states, good health and well-being for people. To ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Attention to health and well-being, educating women on breast cancer awareness will empower them.

In this paper, elite women empower themselves

socially, economically and politically through breast cancer awareness, information in consumer magazines. Good health and well-being brings about healthy mind and so this promotes motivation translating into economic, social and political empowerment.

1.2 Magazines Awareness on Breast Cancer

Breast cancer awareness month, BCAM, also referred to as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM), it is an annual international health campaign organized by major breast cancer charities every October to increase awareness of the disease and to raise funds for research into its cause, prevention and cure (Ehrenreich, 2001). The campaign also offers information and support to those affected and infected by breast cancer. BCAM is also a prime opportunity to remind women to be breast aware for earlier detection (Komen, 2007). Earlier detection is the best treatment. A pink ribbon is the universal symbol of breast cancer awareness. They are worn to honour those who have been diagnosed with the breast cancer and also to identify products that the manufacturer would like to sell to consumers that are interested in breast cancer. It encourages consumers to focus on the emotionally appealing ultimate vision of a cure for breast cancer, rather than on the fraught path between current knowledge and any future cures (King and Samantha, 2006).

During October month, magazines as a medium of communication, contribute greatly in celebrating of Breast Cancer Awareness. Magazines such as *Parents, True Love and the pull-outs* from newspapers provide tangible information on breast cancer awareness; on risk factors of the disease, self-examination of the disease, provides websites where people are advised to visit in order to learn more on the management of the disease and how to hook up with Breast Cancer survivors or sufferers on the forum and many other information related to the disease.

Magazines have become more increasingly important socializing agents in the 21st century. Although people are free to some extent to choose socialization influences from the mass media, they choose some influences more often than others. They tend to choose influences that are more persuasive. People often fit existing cultural standards, and are made especially appealing by those who control the mass media (Kellner, 1995). Today, a series of health matters has been given prominence in magazines. Health matters concerning women have been given preference in women magazines. In this paper, Women magazines referred to magazines that high light issues concerning women. These issues include women health, food and nutrition, fashion and beauty, women lifestyle and all that pertain women. The magazines that highlight these themes are consumer magazines which include; *Parents, True Love, Passion and newspaper pull-outs*. Self-breast Examination, nutrition, personal risk factors, family health history, causes and treatment are the dependent

variables which depend on communication media (consumer magazine) for awareness on Breast Cancer. These are the variables consumers (women) look for in consumer magazines to get awareness on Breast Cancer. These provide information on how to prevent or manage the disease, the causes as well as the treatment. Once the readers receive the information from the magazines, they disseminate to other women who do not access the magazines. Others after receiving the Breast Cancer information, this triggers change of behaviour and thus if affected learn how to manage the disease and if not observe measures of preventing breast cancer. Once, an elite woman has this information, she is confident and encouraged to carry on with her daily chores. She is empowered to carry on with competitive careers with men, she's encouraged, this is not the end of the road, she still has a chance to live.

On Promoting women's economic empowerment, a report done by UNESCO, during international Seminar on women's education and empowerment stated that women's economic participation helps to drive growth at a national level and reduce poverty within communities and households. The researcher conquer with this statement because she believes a healthy woman is confident, develop self-esteem, have the ability to make their own decisions and ready to negotiate for her benefits. She is able to participate in economic activities fully due to good health. The information acquired from the magazines empowers women and encourages them to live healthy and thus continue in building the nation socially, economically and politically.

2.0 Research Design and Methodology

2.1 Study area

The study was conducted in Kakamega Municipality in the larger Kakamega County, Kenya.

The study area emphasized on a cosmopolitan nature of the town having different categories of people working at various levels.

2.2 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design involving mixed method approaches. The research based more on qualitative design. Mixed methods design was used to broaden understanding by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches and also to build on the results from each approach. The quantitative data was used to provide supportive information on breast cancer awareness (Creswell, 2009). The researcher administered both questionnaires and interviews in order to get a sample that is representative for the whole population of women in Kakamega Municipality. The survey method was effective in gathering data from a large group. It also facilitated organization of data in an orderly way. The survey also saved time and also allowed the researcher to understand the population by studying a part of it. The researcher used accessible population of women who read magazines. This was achieved through snowballing method.

2.3 Target population and Sample size

The research population was all women in Kakamega Municipality who read magazines. This was accessible population of 346 elite women who read magazines. This was reached out after purposive, snowballing and stratified sampling that the researcher was able to come up with this figure of elite women who read magazines. These included elite women from Educational institutions, banking sector, business women, civil servants and civil society who access at least a copy of a magazine per month. This is illustrated in the Table 1.

Table 1

Research Population and Sample Size

| STUDY POPULATION | STRATA | ACCESSIBLE POPULATION(AP) | SAMPLE POPULATION 30% of AP |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Civil Servants | Health | 30 | 09 |
| | Education | 40 | 12 |
| | Local government | 38 | 11 |
| | Internal Security | 39 | 12 |
| Bank Employees | Co-operative bank | 18 | 05 |
| | National bank | 14 | 04 |
| | KCB | 15 | 05 |
| Educational Institutions | Masinde Muliro University | 60 | 18 |
| | Matende sec school (public) | 12 | 04 |
| | Bishop Sulumeti sec school | 10 | 03 |
| Business women | Boutiques | 13 | 04 |

| | | | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| | Hotels | 15 | 05 |
| Civil Society | Msamaria mwema Wangwete women grp | 15 | 05 |
| | Kakamega Network For Youth leaders | 12 | 04 |
| | TOTAL | 346 accessible population | 102 sample population |

2.4 Sampling

Sampling is the description of the strategy which the researcher used to select representative respondents from the target population (Oso and Onen, 2005). The study adopted purposive sampling technique, snowball sampling and stratified random sampling. This was in consideration of time and cost of the study because of the population being too large to be studied as a single entity. Purposive sampling enabled the researcher to use cases that had required information in magazines as far as breast cancer awareness is concerned. With snowball sampling, initial participants with desired characteristics identified during purposive sampling technique named other participants that they knew had the desired characteristics.

These was done till the researcher got the number of research population that represented women in Kakamega Municipality and these was found to be 346 accessible population. Stratified sampling was incorporated to avoid any biasness so that all the women population in Kakamega Municipality was represented. Stratified sampling was used to achieve desired representation from the various sub-groups in the population. The population was divided into strata: Civil Servants, Bank employees, Educational institutions, Business women and civil society.

The selected participants were a representative of the total population in order to produce a miniature cross-section of the whole population. Therefore the researcher administered 92 questionnaires to purposively sampled working women to the above categories. The remaining 10 key respondents participated in in-depth interviews. This made a sample size of 102 respondents who made a representative of women in Kakamega Municipality.

This is thirty percent of the accessible population of 346 working women who read magazines in the Kakamega Municipality. Stratified sampling ensures inclusion in the sample of sub-group which otherwise would be omitted entirely by other sampling methods because of their small numbers in the population.

In-depth interviews were audio recorded and voices transcribed and analyzed. These was done in two sessions for each respondent; each session taking ten minutes to gather more detailed relevant data. Note taking was done by use of audio- tape recording the interviewer's questions as well as the interviewee's answers exactly as expressed. Recording the interview gave the researcher time to concentrate on flow of the interview without worrying about taking elaborate notes (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011). This was to enable no leaving out of information owing to forgetfulness or any

other kind of omission. Tape recording facilitated data analysis since the information was played back and studied more thoroughly. The recording also speeded up the interview thus time saving.

Sample sizes in qualitative research tend to be small because of the volume of verbal data that must be analyzed and because this type of design tends to emphasize intensive and prolonged contact with the respondents (Speziale and Carpenter, 2003). Therefore these substantiates why the sample size of this study was small.

3.0 Data Analysis

Quantitative data was collected from filled questionnaires, all responses (variables) were then coded to facilitate their use and compatibility with the assistance of computer programme; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Responses from the questionnaires were grouped along generalized themes and coded alongside the other responses in the SPSS spreadsheet. Data analysis was done using the computer programme SPSS version 11.5 to analyze quantitative data. Frequencies and percentages of the responses were used to analyze the obtained information descriptively which was then summarized and presented using graphs, pie charts and tables.

Qualitative data was analyzed thematically whereby codes having similar characteristics were categorized into one group. "Coding involves highlighting extracts of the transcribed data and labeling these in a way that they can be easily transcribed, retrieved, or grouped" (Dornyei, 2007). Thematic analysis involved searching for themes of relevance to the research topic under which data from in-depth interviews was organised.

Document analysis involved analysis of literature on breast cancer in consumer magazines. The researcher looked at emerging issues on breast cancer discussed in these magazines and provided some extracts. The researcher concentrated on the October publications because this is a breast cancer awareness month internationally.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was collected from filled questionnaires, then coded to facilitate their use and compatibility with the assistance of computer programme; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. Responses from the questionnaires were grouped along generalized themes and coded alongside the other responses in the SPSS spreadsheet.

Frequencies and percentages of the responses were used to analyze the obtained information descriptively which was then summarized and presented using graphs and tables.

4.1.1 Level of Breast Cancer Information in Magazines

The researcher dealt much on October magazines. October is a National Breast Cancer

Awareness Month (NBCAM) and thus this is one of the reasons the researcher sought to find out what information were discussed in October magazines that brought awareness to women. October month is the prime opportunity to remind women to be breast aware for earlier detection of any lump (Komen, 2007). To answer this objective, the researcher asked the respondents what Information on breast cancer they read in magazines. Table 2.0 demonstrate the results.

Table 2

Information on Breast Cancer found in Magazines

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Causes and Treatment | 19 | 20.65 | 20.65 |
| Self- Breast Exam | 13 | 14.13 | 14.13 |
| Mammography | 1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| all above | 58 | 63.00 | 63.00 |
| Others | 1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| Total | 92 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Table 2.0 indicates that fifty eight (63%) of information read in magazines were about the causes and treatment of breast cancer, Self-Breast Examination and mammography-screening of the breast using a specialized machine. This indicated that these three dependent variables were highly dependable on magazines for awareness on breast cancer. This concurs with Wilson (2002) that the magazine editor selects information and then portrays to the audience only what they deem fit for dissemination. Thus these are the information on breast cancer that the publisher deemed important to the consumers. This shows that the three variables i.e. causes and treatment, mammography and Self Breast Examination are most important as far as breast cancer awareness is concerned. If one is aware of her breast and checks regularly for any lump, it is the best treatment (Dr. Mugambi, 2012). Additionally, if one is aware of the risk factors that cause breast cancer such

as smoking, alcohol use and obesity, she will change her life style so that she does not get herself with this dreadful disease. Dr. Mugambi (2012) adds that women aged forty years and above should have a mammogram once a year as part of their annual checkups

4.1.2 Influence of Breast Cancer information in Magazines on Elite Women in Kakamega Municipality.

The researcher sought to investigate whether information on breast cancer in magazines had influenced working women in Kakamega Municipality. The researcher sought to find out if the information in magazines had helped women to make decisions in curbing breast cancer menace and thereby empowering them to carry out their day to day activities. Table 3.0 present the results.

Table 3

Information Shaped Opinion on Breast Cancer

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|
| Yes | 75 | 82.4 | 82.4 |
| No | 16 | 17.6 | 17.6 |
| Total | 91 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The respondents were asked if they had been influenced by breast cancer information in magazines in making decisions on breast cancer. Seventy five (82.4%) responses agreed that indeed their opinion on breast cancer had been shaped by the information read in magazines. This suggests that magazines have played a big role in disseminating information on breast cancer. It also indicates that elite women are more aware of the disease and thus observe their life style which is among the factors that cause breast cancer. This has been supported by Dominick (2009), he says that magazines have the ability to select and emphasize certain topics such as on health thereby influencing the readers

perception on issues raised as important. Further, Dominick (2009) elaborates that one of the functions of magazine is surveillance. Magazine portrays current information on health matters that seem to be educative and also features people who share their experiences. This makes the readers to emulate what has been portrayed by the magazines in order to help them grow healthy and also educate others. Though these education, infected as well as affected women are empowered and are able to get on with their daily activities economically, politically as well as socially because they are encouraged that this is not an end in itself.

Extent of Agreement on Use of magazines

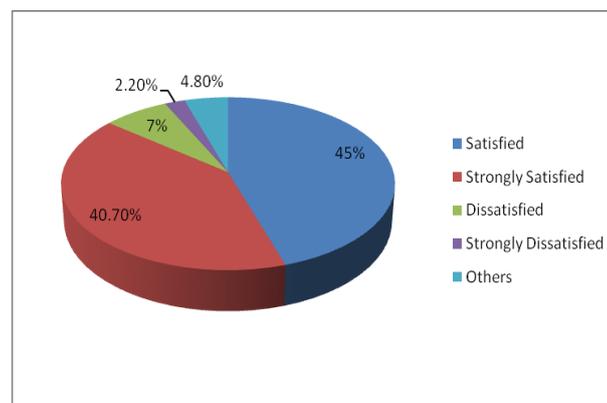


Figure 1
Extent of Agreement on use of magazines

The respondents were asked what extent they agreed that magazines as a medium of communication could be used as a tool for disseminating information to women. Figure 1.0 shows the results. Forty one (45.1%) agreed that they were satisfied that magazines were tools for disseminating information to women while 37(40.7%) strongly agreed that they were satisfied. This shows that indeed through magazines, elite women do learn a lot. This information about breast cancer awareness empower them in terms of being aware of its existence, how to cope with the disease if affected or infected. They get information on early treatment, support groups, where to seek for treatment for the infected ones. All these empower women and so they are able to engage in activities socially, politically and economically.

4.2 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviewing of ten key respondents and these were audio recorded. The interview was audio recorded in order to capture all that interviewees were saying and also this was to free the interviewer from the task of taking detailed notes thus concentrate on asking questions and probing further (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011). The data was then analyzed thematically whereby codes having

similarities were put together to form themes. In the first stage, the researcher transcribed the voices by turning them into transcripts and making them whole sentences without altering with the meaning. This was done to all the interviews. These were then re-familiarized by reading all the transcripts and removing all unnecessary words, repetitions and exclamations. The researcher then made a copy of the cleaned transcripts without altering with the meaning. This was followed by highlighting chunks that had relevant issues concerning the study objectives coming up with codes which were used to form themes. Re-familiarization was important in order to form a general idea of what the data was all about as well as the researcher's initial interpretations regarding the data (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011). During this process, the researcher also noted emerging issues and this was put in a separate bank to be used later. This was the first phase of coding referred to as open coding. At the second phase of coding; axial coding, the researcher grouped similar codes from the first phase merging them together to form sub-themes. This was successful by carrying out winnowing of codes. This reduces the number of codes by putting related information into one sub-theme as well as reducing the big chunk of data (Dornyei, 2007).

The third phase of coding referred to as

selective coding (Creswell, 2009). The researcher came up with the relevant themes in relation to the objectives of the study from the sub-themes. Some themes emerged from the data that did not correspond to the research questions but these were also considered important in this findings (Jwan and Ong'ondo, 2011). These included; the demographics of the respondents plus their occupations, empowerment of women through magazines as far as breast cancer awareness is concerned. Age was considered important because it showed the ages of participants in the study. The researcher came up with the following themes in order to meet the objectives of the study: accessibility of magazines, breast cancer description / definition, information on breast cancer in magazines; Self Breast Examination, symptoms of breast cancer, causes of breast cancer, risk factors associated with breast cancer, treatment of breast cancer and finally women empowerment through breast cancer awareness in magazines.

Finally, the fourth stage of thematic analysis involved developing the narrative. The researcher built a narrative by connecting the categories, picking out the extracts that best illustrated themes by giving an explanation of the data in a manner that they could make sense to a reader. The researcher then evaluated and analyzed the data to determine the adequacy of information and credibility in answering the research questions. The researcher did this with all the themes and came up with the first draft which was again edited without distorting the information to come up with the final draft. In summary, qualitative analysis consisted of identification of the data collected, coding of the data and categorizing patterns found in the data to make themes.

4.2.1 Information on Breast Cancer in Magazines

Magazines have the ability to select and emphasize certain topics, thereby influencing the readers perception on the issues raised as important. This concurs with Dominick (2009) who says that print media has an impact on agenda setting. Thus magazines as a source of information had several topics on breast cancer as testified by the respondents. The respondents were asked to discuss the information read in magazines on breast cancer. They found out information on the following: causes of breast cancer, mammography, the treatment, the symptoms, risk factors associated with breast cancer, best remedy for breast cancer, Self-Breast Examination, articles on life experiences of women with breast cancer. A key respondent from one of the girls' schools in Kakamega Municipality said,

"...I think magazines have been a major help because most of the information I have told you have gotten from the magazines.....so magazines are a good source of information on breast cancer awareness....."

A banker working with one of the banks in the Municipality had this to say,

"...I have read a lot about awareness months in

October magazines. I have read about the social groups formed by breast cancer patients, the management of breast cancer as well as places to seek for help in cases where one has detected a lump..."

Four respondents echoed that the information they had read in magazines especially the *pull outs* was on SBE, the causes as well as on nutrition. Women are advised to avoid fatty foods especially junk foods and to exercise frequently.

4.2.2 Causes of Breast Cancer

During the in-depth interview, one of the bankers in the Municipality had this to say concerning personal risk factors that causes breast cancer in magazines,

".....infact most of the information I am giving you, like on diet and exercises, I have read them from *parents' magazine*...."

This indicates that she learnt of these causes of breast cancer through magazines.

According to one of the principals from a secondary school on causes of breast cancer,

"...what I have learnt from media especially magazine is that breast cancer is caused by our style of life and the kinds of foods we eat....."

A business woman from the Municipality said,

"...one can inherit breast cancer through family life (hereditary), if there is someone a close relative with breast cancer, this can be passed on to other siblings.."

A banker from one of the banks in the Municipality said, "there's risk of breast cancer to women who get children late in their lives, after thirty years and above..."

She also said that too much drinking and alcohol taking is also discouraged because this causes breast cancer. One of the business women running a boutique and a salon also concurred with this statement. Three respondents said that breast cancer is caused by the women's life styles; these include too much fatty foods, lack of exercises, alcohol taking and smoking.

4.2.3 Treatment of Breast Cancer

Referring to treatment of breast cancer, respondents had these to say: A business woman said,

"...I have read in magazines that breast cancer can be treated through chemotherapy and radioactivity, though early detection is the best treatment.."

One of the respondents said,

"... breast cancer can be treated only when it has been detected early, it can be stopped from spreading, then one can also undergo an operation, then radiotherapy and chemotherapy.."

A business woman running a boutique asserted that,

"...well, what I know on treatment of breast cancer is that when it is detected early, it is treatable..."

Dr. Oketch from Kakamega Provincial Hospital;

"...Majority of women present with breast cancer in stages one and two and we offer them with breast saving / breast conserving surgery.... We don't remove the entire breast...majority present with lumps and we do remove the lumps or remove the

quadrant having the lump, to a few with advanced disease, we do simple mastectomy.....we are able to offer them radiotherapy and chemotherapy....”

4.2.4. Self-Breast Examination (SBE)

Self-Breast Examination simply means examining your breasts by palpating it to check for a strange lump. In conducting the in-depth interview, the respondents were asked if they had any information on SBE and if they also practice the same. The respondents seemed to have had some knowledge on SBE. They pointed out that women are advised to be palpating their breasts routinely in order to check for any lumps because if this is detected early, it is treatable.

One of the leaders of a women group had this to say,

“I press my breasts to check if there is a lump....I read in *parents* magazine that if you happen to discover that you have the lump of course after SBE, it's better you go to the doctor for examination and start treatment..”

A key respondent from one of the Municipality schools had this to say, “...for my students ,we encourage them to do SBEduring October month; the breast cancer awareness month, there's a lot of information on breast cancer in mass media and we try to impart the skills to our girls to be able to examine themselves because breast cancer not only affect old women but also affect young women too.”

She pointed out that this is a simple procedure that anybody can do to herself.

The Best remedy for breast cancer is early detection through Self Breast Examination. This concurs with Dr. Mugambi (2012) of Nairobi Hospital as quoted in *Living* magazine;

“.....Screening for cancer of the breast through Self Breast Examination, is the most effective means of detecting early breast cancer. It is therefore important that all women, from puberty, learn how to do Self Breast Examination properly to breast check for lumps. This must be carried out once every month during monthly periods or on the first date of every month for those without their periods or in menopause.....”

Dr. Oketch a key informant in this research had this to say,

“.. quite a number of ladies are now enlightened we see them coming ranging from ages 20 to 60, thanks to breast cancer awareness groups like Soroptimist International Club of Kakamega...quite a number of women come to have their breasts checked and they have also been taught about SBE and so quite a number do self-assessment and when they discover anything strange they rush to experts for treatment..”

One of the prominent business woman in the Municipality advises other women to be going for checkups regularly to detect for any lumps because if detected early breast cancer is treatable rather than the problem being detected late and getting their breasts cut. A Principal from one of the schools said that from the knowledge she had from magazines, early identification

of breast cancer is the best because if this is detected late when the disease has already spread it is difficult to treat.

True Love magazine, October 2007 states that, “Early detection is your best protection.....breast health starts with you knowing your own breasts just like you know your face or hands....” This shows that carrying out Self Breast Examination regularly helps women learn what is normal for their breasts and thus will be able to notice any abnormal changes. One of the key respondents from a secondary school said that women are advised to touch their breasts to check for any lumps because this is the only surety way to detect breast cancer.

One of the respondents who is a banker had this to say,

“...magazines provide a lot of information on breast cancer it is only that one is required to read them frequently because you will find that in one edition they are talking about causes, the other one will have information on management next may have an article on life experience with breast cancer therefore one must be a consistent reader of magazines.....”

Parents' magazine March 2007, had information on breast cancer survivor as well as information on Self Breast Examination;

“.....if tumours are detected early enough treatment and cure is almost 100 percent successful. Experts' advice women from age 20 and above to do monthly Self Breast Examination (SBE)...” the magazine also provided the steps on a SBE.

Dr. Mugambi (2012) in *Living Magazine* summarizes the basic steps of Self Breast Examination as follows:

“**Step 1**-While Standing, shoulders straight and arms on your hips, face a mirror. Look for any differences in size, shape, colour, swelling or skin texture, changes in the nipple or any signs of redness or rash.

Step 2 –Raise your arms and examine your breasts for any of those changes.

Step 3- Gently squeeze each nipple to check for discharge.

Step 4- Lie down and feel each breast with the opposite hand by palpating. Feel all the tissues in a methodical manner to cover all areas of each breast, applying pressure to check deep tissue for any lumps or abnormalities.

Step 5-Examine both breasts while standing and sitting, and gently examine the entire breast.

Dr. Mugambi notes that having information in magazines, readers (women) need to practice these so that they detect any lump so that they get treatment early because this is the best treatment.

4.2.5 Mammogram

Cokkinides (2008) defines a mammogram as an x-ray picture of the breast. Further explains that mammograms can be used to check for breast cancer in women who have no signs or symptoms of the disease. During the in-depth interview, four respondents had an

overview of what mammogram was. They described it as using a specialized machine to detect breast cancer. However, six respondents did not know or had scanty knowledge on mammography.

A business woman running a boutique had this to say,

“...well, I have heard about it but I don't know much about it...”

“...I have not heard about it...”

The researcher brought about screening of the breast (mammography) because it is one of the ways pointed out in magazines as among early detections of breast cancer to especially women having dense breasts.

4.2.6 Extent of Agreement on Use of magazines

This question prompted women who were interviewed to explain the extent they agreed that indeed magazines help in breast cancer awareness and in so doing, they are empowered with the knowledge to involve in various activities.

One of the key respondents from a bank had this to say,

“..... I have read *True Love* magazine and has helped me to know that October is a breast cancer awareness month...also helped to know that pink ribbon is a symbol of breast cancer awareness.....”

In addition, a women group leader said that,

“...am not really satisfied that magazines can be used to disseminate information because of language barrier, magazines are expensive and also can only reach a few who are elite unlike radio which can broadcast in mother tongue.....”

One of the business women said,

“.....*True Love* has helped me to remember that October is breast cancer awareness month.... When October comes, it makes me know what new has been discovered about breast cancer in terms of causes, treatment, and all these empowers and encourages a woman to be optimistic in life.....”

4.4 Opinion on Magazines as a Tool for Disseminating Breast Cancer Information

The information read in magazines had some impact on women in the Municipality and thus prompted them to make some decisions;

A business woman running a boutique had this to say.

“..The information I got in magazines made me satisfied because they encouraged me to go for check up...earlier, I used to be afraid but when I read in magazines that when breast cancer is detected early, it can be treated, I was able to go for screening”.

A banker in one the banks in the Municipality had this to say,“..through parents' I have been able to share my opinions on breast cancer. There's a coupon you fill and send. I have been able to know centers where I can get help concerning breast cancer..”

A leader of one of the civil society groups said that,

“..*True Love* magazine has helped me to remember that the month of breast cancer awareness is October, when October month comes it makes me know about what news has been discovered about breast cancer, the new causes, may be am at risk ; it has helped me know something new about breast cancer”.

A Key respondent from one of the Girls' schools

commented on *pull out magazines*,

“..*woman instinct* has made me to wear a pink ribbon during October month to create more awareness to my students and staff..”.

Dr. Oketch had this to comment;

“... magazines have created a big role in creating awareness of breast cancer.... I have read good articles concerning breast cancer...because some patients what have prompted them to come for medication is the articles they have read in magazines and I thank the media for the good role in helping create awareness to the public to know the various ailments that afflict mankind..”

4.3 Document Analysis

This involved analysis of literature on breast cancer in consumer magazines. The researcher looked at emerging issues on breast cancer discussed in these magazines and provided some extracts. The researcher concentrated on the October publications because this is a breast cancer awareness month internationally.

4.3.1 Breast Cancer Survivors and Experience

The researcher looked at the breast cancer survivors and their experiences. This has been brought out in different magazines, the survivors talking about their experience and how they are managing the disease. They are also encouraging women to familiarize with their breasts and breast cancer is not the end of life. In *Parents March 2007:22*, edition, Alice has been to hospital a few more times for operations and she has totally overcome the fear of cancer.

“Infact cancer has made me stronger than I was before. I can handle any situation and work anywhere...”.This encourages women who read this article to know that this disease cannot hinder you from carrying out your work effectively.

Parents March, 2009:26, have an article on “*Living in Hope-breast cancer not end of Life*”. Grace's advice is that having a positive attitude and best possible care helps in the healing process. This encourages cancer patients not to loose hope in life.

4.3.2 Breast Cancer prevention

October, 2007:42 parents magazine states that breast cancer prevention starts with knowing the truth. The magazine highlighted several preventions of breast cancer. Breast awareness is the greatest weapon a woman has to fight against breast cancer. The recommendation is ‘TLC’, Touch, Look and Check. This means getting to know what is normal for you whenever you can-in the shower, in the mirror, lying down in bed or whatever works for you. This edition goes further by highlighting the following: regular exercises can help protect you from breast cancer, the pill increases your breast cancer risk, drinking alcohol increases your risk, breastfeeding reduces your risk, consider your diet-avoid saturated fats, use of anti-perspirant can give you breast cancer. By highlighting all these, it helps women to take care of

themselves to curb breast cancer. *True Love October 2007:55 magazine*, “Touch Yourself Campaign” highlighted article on celebrities who celebrated their breasts in honour of breast cancer. The celebrities

encouraged girls and women to learn more about their breasts and take the necessary precautions to avoid becoming victims.



Source: Adopted from *True Love magazine October 2007:55*

Figure 2

Touch Yourself Campaign

The campaign was to encourage girls and women that it's normal and healthy to examine their breasts.

Wangui an NGO Programme Associate also contributed by saying;

“...it is very important for us women to take care of our breasts. I started going for mammograms early because my mother is a breast cancer survivor and she always reminds me to have frequent check-ups....I encourage my friends and colleagues specifically in October month to participate in breast cancer awareness initiatives and also go for a mammogram...”

5.0 Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to find out the information on breast cancer discussed in magazines. The guiding question was; what issues on breast cancer are discussed in consumer magazines? This was incorporated with the documentation from the magazines. The respondents said they read most of the information they had on breast cancer from magazines. Three out of the ten respondents interviewed pointed out

that one needs to be a frequent reader in order to learn different issues concerning breast cancer. This was because different magazine editions publish different topics on breast cancer so one has to be a consistent reader in order to learn more. Therefore the study found out that all October magazines had an article on breast cancer, different editions had different issues discussed. Consumers only need to be ardent readers in order to learn more on breast cancer awareness.

Secondly, this information on breast cancer awareness influenced elite working women in making decisions. The findings shows that indeed 82.4% of respondents agreed that their opinion on breast cancer awareness had been shaped by information read in magazines. Therefore, the study found out that magazines play an important role in disseminating of information; this is because they are exclusive and mainly centered around the issues of women who are their target audience. Breast cancer awareness through magazines has also played a role in women empowerment. Information is power. Women have learnt on how to cope with the disease, both infected and

affected are encouraged that early treatment is the best and that they are still productive members in society economically, socially as well as politically. All these in turn has made a woman to develop self- esteem, have confidence, have knowledge about their bodies not forgetting to have the ability to make their own decisions and negotiate in politics. Therefore, the specialized media has played an important role in disseminating of breast cancer information thus creating awareness and in turn these has empowered women socially, economically and politically.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study and conclusions, several recommendations have been suggested:

- a) Specialized media; magazines should be made available to all women irrespective of their social class or residence through lowering of costs; this will ensure that everyone acquires knowledge and skills imparted through the media. This will play a major role in women empowerment socially, politically, and economically as it is said a healthy nation is a wealthy nation.
- b) Specialized media has been very expensive and in essence locks out women readers who may need to read the content but do not afford, therefore the government may partner with the various publishing houses in order to subsidize the prices. This will enable more women to read the magazines often and these will contribute to empowerment of women.
- c) Publishers and distributors of magazines should expand their readership levels by distributing the media up to the rural setups which really need the information contained in the magazines in order to help curb the myths surrounding breast cancer existence.
- d) Elite women should take an initiative of visiting women in churches and other women forums to create awareness on breast cancer and this will contribute to empowerment of women in rural areas.

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