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Breast cancer screening: How can we improve women's information?

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Background: Women usually accept the invitation to participate in breast cancer screening but they tend to overestimate the benefit of screening programs or doesn't have an idea of their risk/benefit balance, possibly because most people have little experience in quantifying absolute risk reduction associated with any medical intervention. Under ideal conditions, primary care physician, public health service documentation and other information resources should be helpful tools to quantify the benefits of this type of intervention.

Methods: A randomized controlled clinical trial of 434 women aged between 45 and 69 years was conducted in a Mammography Screening Program Centre in a local Health District in Cádiz (Spain). Women were asked if they had consulted the following sources of information and how often they had done so: friends and family, experts (primary care physician, pharmacist), the media (television, radio, and press), healthcare services or institutions (Andalusian Health Service, Ministry of Health, insurance companies, consumer and self-help association, pamphlets and information), books and online healthcare and medical websites.

Results: Almost none of the participants in the study have received information about the mammographic screening program for breast cancer from their pharmacist, insurance companies or consumer associations. Family and friends, television, press and SAS documentation are the main sources of information.

Biography

During Her training as an oncologist she has developed a doctorate on the perception of women in the mammographic cancer screening program. The results of the research show that their level of knowledge is low and that most participants do not make a true informed decision about their participation in the test. Currently she is continuing her working in the same line of research from the perspective of qualitative research.

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