

**OP 45: A comparison on the level of knowledge among rural and urban women in Colombo district regarding breast cancer**

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**Objective:** To compare the knowledge of rural and urban women in the Colombo district with regard to breast cancer

**Method:** A community based cross sectional study was carried out in 4 urban and 4 rural divisional secretarial areas. Multistage sampling was done and 50 women were selected from each area making a total of 400.

**Results:** Rural women were more aware about the risk factors for the development of breast cancer when compared with urban women ( $p=0.006$ ). 63% of rural and 65% of urban women were aware about the common symptoms of breast cancer. Diagnostic techniques were known by 72% of rural and 70% of urban women respectively. Awareness on available treatment modalities were known correctly by 72% of rural women when compared to 59% of urban women. Knowledge on self examination of breast (SEB) was satisfactory among 61% urban and 57% rural women and the awareness on the importance of mammograms as a screening tool was 37% and 27% respectively in urban and rural population. Public media was the major source of information in both groups.

**Conclusions:** The awareness about the risk factors for breast cancer was significantly higher in rural women. Both groups had a good knowledge on diagnostic techniques. Treatment modalities were better known by rural women. Knowledge on SEB and mammograms as screening tools were less in both groups of women. The contribution of health care system in educating people seems to be poor.