

**Information source preferences of women with breast cancer:
A hospital-based study in Sri Lanka**

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This study assessed the preferences for information sources among Breast Cancer (BC) survivors who attend the out-patient clinics or wards of the National Cancer Institute, Maharagama, Sri Lanka. The main intention of this study is to find the most preferred information source of BC survivors which would be used to develop an educational package on “Information on BC”. A total of four hundred (400) breast cancer survivors who were histologically confirmed and not having major mental health problems were recruited using the consecutive sampling method. The preferences for information sources of the study units were inquired into using a questionnaire administered by trained data collectors. Responses revealed that the affected women desired information from mass media sources either in electronic or printed form and from health care personnel or through informal ways like family and extended family, friends, relations, neighbours, breast cancer survivors, social workmates, etc. The vast majority of the study units (n=350, 87%) strongly indicated that the most preferred source of information on BC was either the locally developed booklet or pamphlet. The majority of study units (n=312, 78%) preferred the specialist doctor, as the source of information. Among the informal methods specified, the majority of subjects preferred family or extended family as the source of information on BC (n=315, 78.8%). Consistent with the p-value in chi-square test, association between age of the respondent and the mean score for preferred source of information revealed that younger women (age ≤ 37 years) (p<0.001) and women who received higher education (passed GCE (A/L) or higher) (p<0.001) preferred a booklet/pamphlet as their most preferred information source. Earlier studies revealed that patients preferred to receive verbal and written information over other information sources such as videos and web-based information. Scientists further emphasized that only a certain amount of information from verbal communication can be remembered by the patients, but written information refreshes their memory. As reported previously, the current study suggests that information on BC should be as a booklet/pamphlet for every younger woman and those who received higher education, since it is easy to carry and read when needed.

Keywords: *breast cancer, information needs, information sources*

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