

Breast Cancer Awareness and Screening



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Introduction

Introduction

This report outlines key discussions, observations, and feedback from a breast cancer awareness focus group session. The session aimed to:

- Educate participants on breast cancer.
- Assess their existing knowledge.
- Address barriers to screening.
- Explore ways to improve engagement and accessibility to breast cancer screening services.

Session Overview

The session began with an introduction to breast cancer awareness. Participants were shown a breast model and asked about their knowledge of breast cancer. This activity helped gauge awareness and provided an opportunity to discuss common perceptions and misconceptions.

Key Discussion Points



Key Discussion Points

Awareness of Breast Cancer

- Participants were asked about their prior knowledge of breast cancer.
- They shared their exposure to breast cancer awareness through media, television, or personal experiences.
- The discussion emphasised the importance of understanding breast cancer symptoms and early detection.

Understanding Mammograms

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Importance of Breast Cancer Screening

- **Early Detection:** Mammograms help identify abnormalities in breast tissue at an early stage.
- **Diagnosis and Treatment:** Early screening increases the chances of successful treatment.
- **Video Presentation:** A video reinforced the importance of mammograms, boosting participants' confidence in the procedure.
- **Feedback on the Video:** Participants found the video informative and said it reduced embarrassment about breast cancer screening.

Quiz on Knowledge Sharing

A quiz was conducted to assess participants' knowledge and encourage discussion on the pros and cons of breast cancer screening.

Advantages of Screening:

- Detects cancer early, improving treatment outcomes.
- Provides peace of mind by reducing anxiety.

Concerns and Barriers to Screening:

- Fear of radiation exposure.
- Embarrassment about the procedure.
- Anxiety and stress associated with screening.

Addressing Barriers to Screening

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To encourage participation in breast cancer screening programs, several solutions were discussed:

Education and Awareness

- Provide clear and reassuring explanations of the screening process.
- Offer information on what happens during screening to reduce fear.

Improving Accessibility

- Mobile screening vans (e.g., at hospitals like NUH, Shrewsbury) to improve access.
- Walk-in services to eliminate scheduling barriers.
- Organised visits to screening centres to familiarise individuals with the process.

Enhancing Convenience

- Increased awareness before appointments to reduce anxiety.
- Screenings are scheduled at convenient locations.
- Transport options for individuals with mobility challenges.

Communication and Transparency

- Provide clear guidance on what to expect during screening.
- Clarify that the recommended screening age is between 30–40 years.

Key Findings

Key Findings

Language Barriers

- Some participants had difficulty understanding medical information due to language differences.
- The need for translation services was emphasized to ensure effective communication.

Staff Attitudes

- Concerns were raised about healthcare staff's approach when dealing with first-time screening participants.
- Sensitivity training for medical professionals was suggested to make screenings more comfortable.

Appointment Timing for Individuals with Learning Disabilities (LD)

- Participants were informed that individuals with learning disabilities are given double the standard appointment time for additional support.

Key Takeaways from the Session

- Increased awareness of breast cancer symptoms and signs to check.
- Understanding the importance of regular screening and self-examinations.
- Awareness of screening during summer months when holidays allow for easier scheduling.

How to Share Information with the Community



How to Share Information with the Community

General Practitioners (GPs) as Key Messengers

- GPs should provide breast cancer screening information during routine check-ups.
- Yearly health assessments should include discussions on screening benefits.

Paper-Based Information

- Printed materials (handouts, posters, pamphlets) ensure accessibility for those without internet access.
- These should be placed in healthcare facilities and community centres.

Community Engagement

- Organising local events and informative sessions to spread awareness.
- Collaborating with community leaders and organisations to reach diverse populations.

Advertising in GP Practices

- Posters and leaflets in GP waiting areas provide passive education.

- Key details should include eligibility, benefits of screening, and how to book an appointment.

Flyers in Public Spaces

- Distribute flyers at libraries, supermarkets, community centres, and places of worship.
- Flyers should be visually appealing and easy to understand.

Conclusion

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The breast cancer focus group provided valuable insights into awareness levels, barriers to screening, and potential solutions. Key takeaways include:

- The need for education, accessibility, and clear communication to encourage participation.
- Addressing concerns related to embarrassment, anxiety, and language barriers.
- Prioritising community outreach, staff training, and mobile screening options to improve access.

Future efforts should focus on targeted interventions to ensure breast cancer screening services are inclusive and widely accessible.

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