



IBA TODAY

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AWARENESS IS POWER

Breast Cancer is a disease affecting more than a million women and men every year, all around the globe. Pakistan alone has the highest rate of breast cancer in Asia- yet the public's information surrounding it is vague at best.

This month, thousands of organizations dedicate themselves to this cause- using whatever platforms possible to raise as much awareness about Breast Cancer and its preventions as possible.

IBA Today is proud to be a part of the "Pinktober" campaign. Inside this issue you'll find a multitude of information specially compiled just for our readers. Here's to hoping you leave informed, inspired, and empowered.

IBA TODAY
PINKTOBER ISSUE

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BISMAH AKHTAR

Editor

Women in our society face a plethora of issues on a daily basis. Matters that are related to their health and well being are usually brushed under a rug. The importance and the impact of Pinktober is vast, even if you are not directly affected by breast cancer, please take the time to listen and acknowledge this issue. It needs us, it needs you.



SARAH IMRAN

Editor

Unfortunately, cancer is no stranger to countless families across the globe. October may be just one month dedicated to breast cancer awareness- yet our work should not end. As long as this disease prevails, it is our duty to ensure those suffering are able to understand their symptoms and get the help they need.



NOOR FATIMA

Editor

Cancer - a term that not only destroys a person but also their loved ones. We all long for a life without difficulties but remember: diamonds are made under pressure. Let this month be a reminder that you are more than this disease. You are a Warrior. Never forget that.



SARAH SALMAN

Social Media Head

The most important lesson this year has been that life is too short and precious. There is a huge mass out there unaware of this cancer and the precautionary measures they should adopt. We hope our small effort in spreading awareness about Breast Cancer can reach out to the women who need it- so that the taboo around it can be dismissed and women feel no shame in keeping their health in check.

SUPPORT TO SAVE SMILES!



October is titled as the 'Pink Month' of the year thereby signifying Breast Cancer Awareness. Therefore, at this time of the year, people stress upon educating themselves about the causes, symptoms, and prevention of this disease. Moreover, several others express their support for the Pink October campaign in various useful and friendly ways. Mentioned below are some impactful ways for all of us to support the 'Pink Campaign'.

1) Share A Pink Picture With #Pinktober

Dress up all pink and post a picture of yourself on all the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat, etc.). Using hashtags such as **#Pinktober**, **#GoPink**, **#Breastcancerawareness**, **#WearPink** will aid in nurturing the campaign further. Such posts will, consequently, boost enthusiasm in public. Thus, making a much larger influence regarding the awareness of this disease.

2) Donate For A Noble Cause

Make donations to organizations (**Shaukat Khanum**, **Pink Ribbon Pakistan**, and **National Breast Cancer Foundation**, etc.). Such bodies are working tirelessly to cure patients suffering from breast cancer. Consequently, your donation can give a new life to a person struggling through a challenging phase of life. Hence, you can make a positive change at your end. Apart from this, purchase items from the brands that are promoting the Pinktober campaign. As a result, your money can contribute to saving someone's life.

3) Establish A Fundraising Campaign

Today's youth is so actively engaged in blogging and social media marketing that it is now a piece of cake to start a fundraiser. Therefore, get up and initiate such a campaign for your loved ones who are battling against breast cancer. Also, motivate your friends and family to join you in this mission, and play your role in bringing back a smile on someone's face.

4) Learn And Spread

Grasp the basic information regarding breast cancer (symptoms, causes, and precautions) by volunteering in any related organization. In addition, spread the word so that others are enlightened by your knowledge. This will aid in getting hold of the situation beforehand and will save a life.

5) Let's Join Hands

With most of us being aware of breast cancer, let's make a change on a large-scale. This can be done by promoting this campaign to our family members, friends, neighbors, and others. Also, despite just drooling over the fact that this disease can be dangerous and painful, try to get it diagnosed ahead of time to avoid any mishap. Moreover, support the organizations that are curing our patients from this disease. In the end, your contribution can change several people's lives.



LAIBA RASHID

Junior Writer



If only you checked your breasts as often.



HOPE



AFIFA KHALID
Junior Writer

MISCONCEPTIONS FLYING AROUND BREAST CANCER



Hello, everyone! As the awareness over the years has increased, so have the myths associated with breast cancer. But not to worry, here are a few most common misconceptions about breast cancer flying around that you should get out of your mind!

You can trust these; we have confirmed these myths vs. reality with Dr. Zahabia, an MPhil Student who is currently finalizing her thesis on a Research Study about Breast Cancer.

Myth #1: Only Females Can Acquire Breast Cancer

While females do generally have a very high risk of this cancer, which makes the risk for males almost negligible, it is still present in males. However, women are focused on more due to the higher number of cases. Additionally, there is no evidence saying that only older people are at risk. The cancer may develop in young adults as well.

Myth #2: You're Safe If You Don't Have A Family History

This is one of the many false assumptions or misconceptions. A family history of this does increase the chances of acquiring it. However, studies have shown that only 15% of breast cancer cases have a family history to trace back to!

Myth #3: Use of Antiperspirants, Deodorants or Even Bras Can Cause Breast Cancer

There have been many studies to observe the cause-and-effect relationship between breast cancer and said products. Yet, none of them has provided any evidence of there being a relation. Nonetheless, new research projects about the safety of anti-perspirants and deodorants are still being conducted.

Myth #4: You Always Feel a Lump During Self-Examination If You Have Breast Cancer

Self-exams are important but they shouldn't be the only thing you rely upon. People tend to skip a mammography, thinking they would feel a lump if there would be an issue- not realizing that a lump may not always form, especially during the earlier stages of breast cancer. In fact, regular screening is still recommended over and above self-examinations.

Myth #5: You Cannot Prevent This Type of Cancer

False! Another one of the misconceptions yet again! Eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, controlling your weight (trying not to enter the bracket of obesity), and if you're a mother of a newborn, even breastfeeding; these are few of the many steps that can help prevent this cancer. But sadly, all of this does not completely eliminate the risk. Still, prevention is better than the cure.

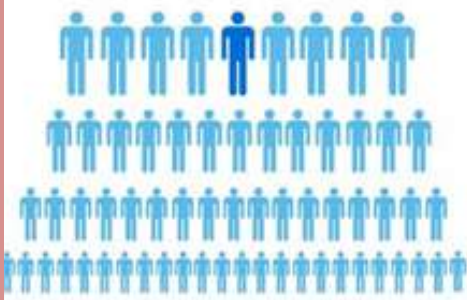
A Message from Dr. Zahabia Khalid

"From someone who has worked at a healthcare facility and seen the worst of breast cancer to a researcher who has spent time studying this particular type of cancer and ways to prevent it, I just want to say that breast cancer can be prevented and cured if treated at the right time. It is one of the few cancers against which prophylaxis is available and is given to high risk patients. This not only helps to prevent cancer, but also helps make the disease less severe. So, if you think you are a high-risk person or you think you can help others by raising awareness against breast cancer, then don't wait!!! Your actions can save someone's life. And what better way to spend your time than fighting for a human life!"

1 in 8 WOMEN
will be diagnosed with
BREAST CANCER
in their lifetime



1 in 1000 MEN
will be diagnosed with
BREAST CANCER
in their lifetime



HAVING A CONDITION ISN'T DISGUSTING. IT'S NORMAL.



Our society has really specific ideals of beauty.

Tall, dark, and lean.

Slim, fair, and pretty.

It clings to these ideals like a fly trapped in tar –unchanging, immovable, and attached till eternity. But beyond specifics, these adjectives all echo the same thought:

We Want Perfection.

Anyone less than that is given a skeptical look-down and an uninterested, *theek hi hai bas*. It is this constant pressure of reaching the beauty apex that makes people lose their sense of security. And when they lose that cozy, comfortable lining that shields them from the world and its judgments, they're left exposed. To cope, they strive for acceptance. They use filter upon filter upon filter. They stop going out in public to avoid chastising Haw-Hayes. They conceal their conditions to not see the disgust on unknown faces.

And That's Not Okay. In Fact, It's Highly Problematic.

I developed a severe sun allergy in my 2nd year of university. Going into the sun, even for five minutes, led to inflamed, reddened rashes cropping up on my face. No one called me ugly or shamed me publicly. But I could see the quizzical looks on their faces. Looks that ranged from *Did she do really bad makeup?* to *What's wrong with her face?* But, this is just one skin issue out of so many.

Psoriasis. Cystic Acne. Eczema. Rosacea.

These science-y words don't sound pretty. But that's all they are: words. Words that define a condition, not a human being. And words that definitely shouldn't be used to shame an individual. *Don't you wash your face in the morning? You should drink more water? Dude, moisturize.* Such unsolicited advice is hilariously redundant because the person living with these conditions worries more about them than another ever would. They undergo painstaking cycles of frightful Google searches, countless dermatologist visits, and expensive medications that rarely work. They don't need constant reminders of obvious issues.



MALEEHA HADI

Junior Writer





Instead, They Need Normal Conversations Without Funny Looks Or Underhanded Taunts.

Have you ever bitten your nails? Fun fact: Nail biting isn't just 'a nasty habit.' More often than not, it is a coping mechanism for anxiety. That means your friend's short, grubby nails aren't so because they don't know how to "maintain" themselves. It's because their brain treats stress like an unwelcome critic instead of an encouraging friend – it just can't take it. Women with shorter nails are more often mocked than their male counterparts – they don't have the dainty, beautiful hands clutching the soap in Lux ads. The frivolity of the issue compared to how big a deal some aunties make it reminds me of Star Plus shows and their exaggerated saas-bahu drama. What started as an anxiety-coping mechanism can ultimately transform into an impulse-control disorder, occurring even in the absence of stress.

And Mental Conditions, Like Physical Ones, Are No Joke.

But, societal judgements make life even harder for those undergoing painful, chronic conditions. 52% of Pakistani women are victims of Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), a hormonal disorder that causes irregular menstrual cycles and excess male hormone production. Yet, you'll encounter very few willing to admit to the condition. That's because they are afraid. And for good reason. If left uncontrolled, PCOS may bring with it problems of fertility, miscarriage, and pregnancy-induced complications. In a country where a woman's worth is often limited to her child-bearing ability, PCOS could derail their lives. Instead of seeing them as 'bechari spinsters,' society needs to see them as, well, human.

Humans Who Aren't "Suffering" From a Disease, But Living in a Body That Just Works a Little Differently.

A confusion – is beauty really black and white? Our fundamental problem is that we eye things from a binary perspective: This is beautiful, and this isn't. This is normal, and this isn't. And maybe that's okay when deciding which phone to buy, or whether to get pineapple on pizza. But in terms of human beings, it's dangerously ignorant and profoundly foolish. Because, in a species where identical thumbprints are an impossibility, how can you successfully define an unflinching normal? At the end of the day, 'normal' is what is generally accepted. And that's why the fear of social ostracization among brave survivors isn't their fault. It's ours. And there's a way to fix that.

***Stop searching for beauty with a telescope.
Instead, gaze at the view all around you with
eyes wide open.***



SEXUALIZATION OF BREASTS: THE UGLY TRUTH BEHIND THE TABOO REGARDING BREAST CANCER



Breasts, or as some may refer to as boobs, hooters, or other terminologies that are too vulgar to be penned down in this article, are the most sexualized body parts of the female anatomy. However, the function of the breast doesn't match its reputation, as there is nothing scandalous or sexy about feeding an infant. The mismatch of the reputation and function of the breast creates a taboo regarding anything related to it. Such taboos prevent women from learning important information regarding breast cancer. This article will explore the relation of how the sexualization of breasts impacts the topic of breast cancer.

Sexualization of Breasts

The sexualization of breasts has dehumanized the organ and made it appear as merely a sexual object. Movies like *Grand Masti*, thrive through the sexualization of the female body in order to engage their male audience. The sexual innuendos used in such content may guarantee their creator's easy views and attention; however, the impact they have on the perception of female bodies is detrimental for society, to say the least. Pornography also plays a huge role in female sexualization to please male viewership. The lewd random advertisements seen while trying to watch movies on online pirated platforms provide evidence of this claim.

The Side Effects

One may now question, what does the sexualization of breasts have to do with the taboo regarding breast cancer? The answer is everything. In our culture, sex and everything related to it is considered impure and shameful, and talking about such things is taboo. When we place sexual innuendos on a vital organ, such as breasts, we are subjecting it to the same scrutiny that anything related to sex must face. Due to its association with sex, the word breast in itself is enough to create an uncomfortable feeling. Females feel shameful to talk about anything related to the breasts as it's considered vulgar to talk about. The lack of discussion leads many individuals to ignore the initial symptoms of breast cancer. Due to the stigma regarding breast cancer, patients find it difficult to open up about the disease. Many insurance companies may not cover the reconstruction of breasts for breast cancer survivors, as they see this procedure as a cosmetic procedure rather than the restoration of a vital organ. Furthermore, the sexualization of breasts also plagues awareness campaigns. Posters and advertisements usually emphasize on saving the breast, not the individual whose going through the trauma. This creates the impact that the breast is far more superior to the patient's life.

Conclusion

We as individuals must be conscious about sexualization and its devastating impacts on the social perception of diseases such as breast cancer. Society needs to see the breast as any normal organ rather than a sexual object. Changes in perceptions regarding it will help breast cancer break away from its current stigma and taboo. Furthermore, it will help in providing emotional support to patients and make information readily available regarding the potentially life-threatening disease.



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BREAST EXAMINATION TECHNIQUES



Every year, approximately 90,000 women in Pakistan are diagnosed with breast cancer. Overall, only 56% of women are able to win this battle. With such a high prevalence rate, it is pertinent that we educate ourselves on ways to prevent it. Below are some breast examination techniques that every woman should practice as a routine check-up.

Step 1:

Start by looking at your breasts in the mirror. Stand straight and keep your arms on your sides. Familiarize yourself with the shape, size, and color of your nipples. Your breasts should be evenly shaped with no visible distortion. To clarify, the size of your breasts may naturally vary a little. Hence, do not worry if you notice one of your breasts slightly larger than the other. What you need to look out for are any changes such as an inward nipple, bulging, dimpling, or puckering of the skin around the nipples. You might notice some rash, swelling, or soreness as well. Notice for changes in color and shape. For a precise examination, place both your hands on your hips and flex your chest muscles. This way, you will be able to observe any visible changes.

Step 2:

Repeat all the above observations by raising your arms above your head. At this stage, notice any discharge coming out of either of your nipples. The discharge might be milky, watery, yellowish, or blood. If you see no discharge, good job! Move on to the third step now.

Step 3:

Time to examine your breasts in the shower. Use your right hand to feel your left breast and vice versa. Keep your fingers together and flat while you move them in a firm but gentle, circular motions of about a quarter. Start from the nipple and gradually circle around the entire breast - from top to bottom, side to side, armpit to the cleavage, and from collarbone to the top of the abdomen. You can keep your arms at your side while you do this step. Repeat the procedure for both the breasts and look out for any lumps, hard-knot, or thickening.

Step 4:

Finally, feel your breasts while lying down. Use your right hand to feel the left breast and vice versa. Keep the other hand behind your head and relax it on a soft pillow. Repeat the motions of your fingers from step 3 and look out for any distortion. Use light pressure on the skin below the breast, medium pressure in the middle, and firm pressure for the deep tissue in the back. Now, gently press your nipple between two fingers to check for any discharge. Next, feel the area under your armpits for any lumps. Repeat the procedure for the other breast.

Congratulations! You have successfully examined your breasts. You deserve a pat on the shoulder for prioritizing your health.



BREAST CANCER AWARENESS IN PAKISTAN: ARE WE THERE YET?



Breast Cancer is one of the major causes of deaths around the world. Pakistan is the leading country in Asia to have encountered most cases of breast cancer. Around 40000 out of 90000 cases registered annually reportedly survive. One in nine women in Pakistan is likely to fall prey to this disease reportedly in 2008. But awareness about breast cancer is the only way to prevent it from causing deaths.

Timely detection and diagnosis is the key to 90% chances of cure and survival.

However in case of Pakistan, awareness of early diagnosis has been very challenging and less effective.

Reasons contributing to less awareness of early diagnosis of breast cancer in Pakistan

1. Psycho-sociological beliefs about breast cancer.

It is in recent times that breast cancer is considered as a disease and is talked about. Otherwise 20 years ago it was hard to even talk about *breast* cancer because it was a taboo. According to a study conducted in 2017, around 10% women chose for no diagnosis due to religious reasons and to prevent any impact on their marriage. Embarrassment and fear of divorce in women still force them to stay quiet about any symptoms of breast cancer.

2. Little information lead to misconceptions about breast cancer in Pakistan.

Many people don't know that breast cancer is a curable disease and its timely detection can save lives. It remains untreated until it actually becomes severe in later stages to cause death. A study conducted by PIMS, Islamabad, affirms that there is a lack of awareness in rural areas of Pakistan that lead to possibility of higher risks. It is also a misconception that breast cancer incidence only occurs in women. Men are also likely to get this disease in the same way as women.

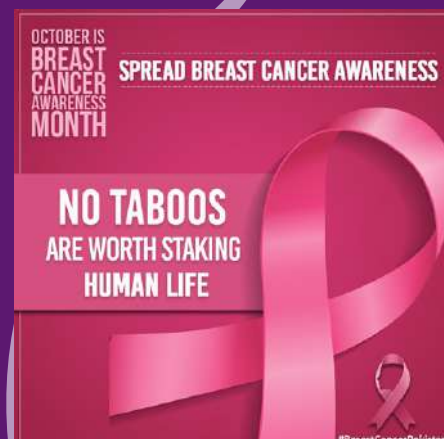
3. Lack of education leads to less or no information about breast cancer in Pakistan.

Education plays a great role in enlightening the masses about topics least discussed otherwise due to socio-cultural reasons. Pakistan has a lower literacy rate with majority of population living in underprivileged and rural areas. Thus breast cancer is less known to the majority living in rural areas of Pakistan.



ANISA SABA ABBASI

Junior Writer



MYTHS & FACTS

MYTH	FACT
I am only 35. Breast cancer happens only in older women.	While the risk of breast cancer increases with age, all women are at risk for getting breast cancer.
Women with family history of breast cancer are the ones who get breast cancer.	Actually, most women who get breast cancer have no family history of disease.
Women with more than one risk factor are the ones who typically get breast cancer.	Majority of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no known risk factor.
If I had a mammogram every year, I would be exposed to too much radiation, and that would cause cancer.	The small level of radiation from mammograms is believed to be safe with the benefits outweighing the risk.

4. Lower health budget refrains required spending on breast cancer awareness campaigns in Pakistan.

Pakistan spends less than 1% of its income on health. This is surprisingly low and adds to the lack of awareness campaigns throughout Pakistan including remote and rural areas. Training the lady health workers alone to spread awareness about early detection through self-examination and mammography requires a lot of finance.

5. Barriers to information transfer lead to less effective awareness of breast cancer in Pakistan.

As we witnessed in case of Covid-19, the government took measures and utilized the call service messages to make people aware of the virus. We see that in the month of October, the government spread awareness about breast cancer in the same way. But if we look closely, most of the men in rural areas are not familiar with Urdu and nor are they familiar with the terminologies to understand the message. They are most likely to ignore it. Further, the women in rural areas do not keep phones as a cultural norm. Hence the effectiveness of such efforts remains very low.

How To Make The Awareness Campaigns More Effective

1. With the increasing use of social media and mass media it is comparatively cheaper and easier to spread the word. But despite the fact that awareness campaigns are witnessed by the masses, yet only urban population is exposed to them. The rural population remains uninformed and unaware of basic information about breast cancer. Rigorous efforts must be made to ensure that the rural population is well-informed about breast cancer and other such diseases that are curable.
2. Responsible representatives from every rural area must be given the task of training few women to inform every other woman.
3. There should be free seminars and medical camps set up quarterly over the year to do clinical examinations of the under privileged.
4. Awareness messages must be transmitted in all prevalent and prominent languages of Pakistan in order to make sure reach-ability and comprehensibility of the message.

Hence, we see that despite large scale awareness campaigns, Pakistan still remains incapable of putting the message across the entire population. It is not the disease itself which is deadly, it is the lack of awareness that makes it one. It is right that prevention is better than cure and it is about time that we become proactive to save 40,000 human lives every year.



HYGIENE AND ITS IMPORTANCE



Hygiene is a critical aspect as it has an important role in your personal and social wellbeing. Hence, in order to keep good hygiene, one must ensure his movements and surroundings are safe and hygienic. Similarly, students must ensure their stay at the campus is safe and hygienic for themselves and others as well. Of course, this is most required during the spread of Covid-19.

Importance of Hygiene

Implementation of good hygiene is important in educational institutes and workplaces. A good hygiene allows you to avoid things like bad breath, body odor. Most importantly, it increases your chance of getting exposed to disease and infection. And, during the spread of Covid-19, it is very important to practice hygiene by frequently washing hands and avoiding contact to frequently used places.

At the campus, frequently used spots should be disinfected on daily basis. Moreover, the cafeterias should also be cleaned including the chairs and tables. And the staff should wear proper equipment while cooking and preparing meals. Indeed, ensuring these practices are important both to stop the spread and have a good hygiene. Furthermore, being clean and well-groomed makes you feel comfortable and confident both mentally and physically.

Conclusion

Evidently, it is certain that we need more hygiene awareness at educational institutes to halt further and keep an overall neat and clean environment. As students, it is important for us to maintain neatness personally and ensure it in our surroundings as well.



MUHAMMAD HASSAN

Senior Writer





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