

## Abstract

**Background:** Breast, cervical, and thyroid cancer are the most common types of cancers seen among women in Sri Lanka. Knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of screening of these cancers are important factors in determining the utilization of the Well Woman Clinic (WWC) services in Sri Lanka especially among the target age groups of 35 and 45 years of women.

**Objectives:** The purpose of this study was to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the breast, cervical, and thyroid cancer screening and factors associated with utilization of the Well Women Clinic services among women aged 35 and 45 years.

**Methods:** A community-based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 423 females of the 35 and 45 year age cohorts in the Eligible Family Register, using simple random sampling according to the proportions in the 35 (n=275, 65%) and 45 (n=148, 35%) year age cohort at the Moratuwa Medical Officer of Health area, from March 2019 to January 2020. Pre-tested, interviewer-administered questionnaires were used. Results were analyzed using a scoring system with SPSS 23. Associations were carried out using the Chi-square test with a significance level at  $p=0.05$ .

**Results:** The majority of the study population had poor knowledge of breast (35 years:68%; 45 years:81.1%), cervical (35 years:95%; 45 years:100%), and thyroid (35 years:84% and 45 years:100%) cancer screening. Although the majority of the study population had poor practice on breast (35 years:54.5%; 45 years:66.2%) and thyroid cancer screening (35 years:77.8%; 45 years:84.5%) there was good practice on cervical Pap smear screening (35 years:68%; 45 years:61.5%). The majority had poor knowledge seeking behaviour of all three cancers (35 years:68.7%; 45 years:73.6%). There was a statistically significant association between knowledge on breast cancer screening and Well Woman Clinic attendance among 35 years age cohort ( $p<0.001$ ).

**Conclusions and recommendations:** The study concluded that awareness about common cancers affecting women in Sri Lanka was poor among the study population. Therefore, it is imperative to raise awareness among women in the target age group about breast, cervical, and thyroid cancer screening and the services provided at the Well Woman Clinics.

**Keywords:** *Breast cancer, cervical cancer, thyroid gland cancer, Well Woman Clinic*