

## **Perceptions of Young Women about Breast Self-Examination**

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### **Abstract**

Breast cancer is a relatively large health problem in Indonesia and other countries. The majority of sufferers are young, including teenagers. To overcome this, public health efforts are needed, namely through clinical and individual examinations. Breast self-examination (BSE) aims to find out if there are lumps in a woman's breasts. This qualitative descriptive research aims to explore the perceptions of young women about BSE. The research results obtained from seven participants obtained three themes, namely 1) digital media as the main source of BSE information, 2) adolescents' understanding of BSE and 3) the readiness and need for BSE education in adolescents. A good view of young women regarding breast cancer is one of the factors that motivates them regarding efforts to detect early breast cancer (BSE). There is a need for more effective sexual health education, especially among adolescents who are more familiar with digital social media and demonstration methods. This research is expected to be the basis of information and evaluation material for readers regarding the optimization of breast health education strategies for adolescents.

**Keywords:** Perception, Young Women, BSE



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### **INTRODUCTION**

Adolescence is a transitional phase from children to adults who experience a process of rapid growth and development. One of the most striking physical changes that occur during adolescence, especially for young women, is the growth and development of their breast organs. Breasts play an important role in a woman's life; besides being used to breastfeed babies, breasts are also a sexual attraction that is owned by women. However, women's breasts have the potential to experience a disease, one of which is cancer. Therefore, it is very important for women to pay attention to and maintain the health of their breasts (Pratiwi, Ariani, & Karina, 2018).

Breast cancer is a major health problem in Indonesia and in other countries, because it is a terminal disease that can lead to death. Most breast cancers start in the lobules or the ducts that connect the lobules to the nipple. The majority of sufferers are young, not even a few who are only 14 years old and if not detected early will develop into malignant cells. Even now it shows that the symptoms of breast cancer that occur are getting higher at a young age. There are more than 80% of cases in Indonesia which are at an advanced stage, where at this stage treatment efforts are not easy to carry out (Amila & Gulo, 2020).

Based on data in the Health Profile of the Republic of Indonesia for 2021, cancer occupies the second position in the Indonesian population as the highest number of cases out of the 8 main rankings of disease cases experienced by the Indonesian population (RI Ministry of Health, 2022). Meanwhile, based on existing data in Riau Province, there were 172 cases in 2011 and an increase of 207 cases in 2012. According to the medical records of Arifin Achmad Hospital, breast cancer ranks first with 325 cases out of 580 cases in Irna Surgical. Cendrawasih in 2016. Data obtained from Arifin Achmad Pekanbaru Hospital, the prevalence of breast cancer

and other breast-related diseases in 2019 was 2,656 cases, of which there were 2,637 cases in women and 19 cases in male patients. Most cases of breast cancer occurred at the age of 15-24 years as many as 50 people, at the age of 25-44 years as many as 37 people and at the age of more than 44 years as many as 29 people. Breast cancer still has a high probability of being cured if it is found at an early or early stage. 75-85% of breast cancer malignancies are found during breast self-examination (Astri et al., 2020).

Given the magnitude of the breast cancer problem and its impact, it is necessary to have public health efforts/interventions in the form of a national prevention program that has been established by the government through Permenkes No. 34 of 2015 concerning Management of Breast Cancer and Cervical Cancer (Ministry of Health RI, 2015), namely clinical breast examination (SADANIS) and Breast Self-Examination (BSE). BSE is a breast self-examination technique, which aims to find out if there is a lump in a woman's breast that can develop into cancer (Pulungan & Hardy, 2020). The Breast Self Examination Technique (BSE) itself is carried out by the woman examining her own breasts by looking at them and feeling them with her fingers to find out whether or not there is a lump in her breasts. Early detection of BSE has been shown to reduce mortality from breast cancer by up to 20%. The success in reducing the mortality rate also does not rule out the possibility that there are still many women who do not know what BSE is and how to practice it to detect whether there are abnormalities in their breasts or not.

Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted by researchers at SMAN 8 Pekanbaru on December 17, 2022, the researchers conducted cursory interviews with four young women who had been exposed to educational material on early detection of breast cancer (BSE), all of whom said they already knew what BSE was, but some don't know how to do it even though they have been exposed to information about it. The results of interviews with several students showed that all of them realized the importance of doing BSE as an effort to treat breast cancer as soon as possible and to help themselves to become more familiar with and aware of their body's condition. Some of them said that they had done BSE because they were afraid of getting breast cancer. While some others said they had never done BSE with the reason they didn't know how to do it themselves and forgot when to do it. Of all the young women the researchers interviewed, none found any abnormal signs in their own breasts, such as lumps or pain.

Many factors influence the lives of adolescents in this aspect, including family, educational, environmental factors and so on. These factors also influence adolescent perceptions of seeing and doing something, one of which is doing BSE. This is because with a good perception, a teenager will be able to understand the importance of doing BSE, so that teenagers will try to do it seriously and can form good skills in doing BSE (Wahyuningtias, 2013). Based on the phenomena described above, the researcher is interested in conducting research on "Young Women's Perceptions about BSE".

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is a qualitative research using a qualitative descriptive research design. The population used in this study were all young women at SMAN 8 Pekanbaru. The choice of research location was carried out with the consideration that BSE socialization had already been carried out on several individual young women at school, so that it was in accordance with the research objectives to be achieved. The selection of the sample in this study used a purposive sampling method, precisely homogeneous sampling where the researcher will select participants who are considered homogeneous in attitude, experience, and so on according to the research phenomenon, which will then be examined in detail (Afiyanti & Rachmawati, 2014). All participants in this study totaled 7 people, with the main participants being young

women at SMAN 8 Pekanbaru totaling 5 people who had previously received socialization about BSE, as well as supporting participants at the head of UKS SMAN 8 Pekanbaru and the mother of one of the participants.

Data collection in this study used semi-structured individual interview methods using audio recordings to support the accuracy of the interview results. The data collection tools used in this study were cell phone voice recorders, interview guides, field notes, pens, and the researchers themselves. All participants had received prior explanation about the research, research procedures and participant rights by signing an informed consent. To ensure that the research results can be trusted, researchers perform triangulation and member checking methods, as well as other required validity standards. Data analysis was carried out by applying the stages of qualitative data processing from Colaizzi.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Result**

All participants were female, where the main participants were students or students at class XI SMAN 8 Pekanbaru, aged 16 to 17 years, and had previously participated in socialization regarding BSE in 2022. In addition, there were also supporting participants, namely the head of the SMAN UKS 8 Pekanbaru and the mother of one of the participants. The results of the research conducted obtained three themes, namely:

### **Digital Media as the Main Source of Information on BSE**

The results of data analysis from interviews conducted with five participants found that the most source of BSE information was through digital media. The digital media referred to in this case include Instagram social media, website blogs on the internet, as well as online outreach via the Google Form link. Information on socialization regarding BSE that had taken place in schools has also been reconfirmed by researchers through a triangulation technique with the head of the UKS. In addition to socialization held at school, researchers also found one participant who received BSE information through his mother.

The various contents of information previously obtained by participants related to BSE include regarding the meaning of BSE, how to do it, the benefits, as well as some information about breast cancer and what its symptoms are like. This is in accordance with the participant's expression as follows: "he has a picture like that later he will ask what he realized about it. He will explain and then he will ask us to answer the questions in the link." (P3) "...that's how it was explained and then you realized what it was. just keep asking questions like that. like it's good to realize it's done lying down or something like that, there's still a lot." (P2)

### **Adolescents' Understanding of BSE**

The results of the analysis of the five participants obtained information that young women responded positively to BSE. This can be proven in the following participant expressions: "In my opinion, being aware is important sis. I also felt interested too when I first saw there was a way to examine the breasts because before that I didn't know" (P1) "...that's really important in our environment, right? Because we also have to care about ourselves." (P3) "...just so we know if we have cancer or tumors or not breasts." (P4).

From the results of the verbatim interview analysis, it was found that the participants had good knowledge about BSE, from understanding it to how to do it. Participants also revealed that it is better to do BSE in their spare time or while taking a bath. According to the understanding of the participants, BSE began to be carried out from the age of puberty or when teenagers began to experience growth, and could continue to do it for a lifetime and even the elderly, as follows: I started growing up around the age of 12." (P1) "...the problem is if (the

breasts) don't grow, what do you want to be aware of... yes, the elderly are also allowed to do it. There's no age limit for doing an examination like that, sis." (P4).

During the interview, several participants said that BSE could be performed on both men and women. However, there are also those who say that men don't need to do BSE. The following are expressions regarding the participant's views on BSE in men: "...I don't know, Sis, but I don't think so (for men). if it's just for information, that's okay, because it's for knowledge too, right?." (P5) "... It's just the girl who can do it, realize it, if it's a guy there's no need, the problem is there aren't any lumps like that, the risk is really small." (P4).

### **BSE Education Readiness and Needs in Adolescents**

This theme illustrates a meaning, in which adolescents have their own opinions and assumptions which reveal that they have a readiness for and a need for BSE education, whether it has or has not taken place among their current age. Following are the participant's expressions regarding their readiness regarding BSE education: "I am interested, Sis and I are aware of that, so that we care about ourselves... we are also interested in providing education to the people closest to us... the problem is that we also need to educate people so that they are more care about her." (P3) "... so that we are fellow women, we can tell each other something good, and the more people who know, the better." (P2).

The researcher found one of the participants who expressed their need for BSE education which should be done by demonstration or demonstration method, in order to better understand how to do it properly and according to the stages. This is also supported by the results of the triangulation interviews that were conducted with the head of the UKS. The following is an expression from one of the participants: "to be honest, when I realized that, I was actually still confused sis. when I was doing it for a long time, I felt confused about what to do, I was so confused... I just felt confused, because I had never been taught that directly... Oh, I'm interested (doing self-realization) because I want to know how to do it, I want to be good at it too." (P2).

In interviews, researchers also found that all participants were aware of their own health. Here's one of her expressions: and the second is that it is also useful, we can find out whether we have disease or not in our breasts, like that." (P1)

## **Discussion**

### **Digital Media as the Main Source of Information on BSE**

The main information media which is the most numerous and effective source of BSE information for adolescents is in the form of digital media. In line with research conducted by Nisaa & Arifah (2019) which found that digital social media was the platform chosen by 88.4% of respondents to access reproductive and sexual health information. Digital social media offers content that includes audio, video, text and photos. The results of the study show that Instagram is a social media platform that is in high demand by respondents. The hashtag feature on Instagram makes searching for information on Instagram quite easy, and if you feel dissatisfied, you can browse through various other hashtags. Through digital social media, adolescents are able to independently search for and disseminate their positive experiences about healthier behavior changes.

### **Adolescents' Understanding of BSE**

Exposure to information media can be one of the factors that have an impact on young women's knowledge about breast cancer. Information media has a major influence on knowledge, changes in attitudes, feelings, and behavior through communication because these teenagers obtain more information through media exposure compared to those who have never

been exposed to the media, so that the information they receive has an impact on the lives and attitudes they determine in their lives. their lives (Maresa, Riski, & Ismed, 2023).

The findings in this study found that young women's understanding of BSE was in the good category. All young women have a positive response to BSE. Young women understand that BSE has many benefits for themselves. According to all participants, BSE began when women hit puberty. This also shows that young female participants have good knowledge regarding the right time and age to do BSE. According to young women, BSE is also an effective way to detect breast cancer early. All female adolescent participants in this study also understood which parts of the breasts needed to be examined, as well as the stages of performing BSE. However, some of the young female participants could not mention the BSE stages fluently, on the grounds that they did not really understand and were used to doing it, so it was difficult to remember the stages. Based on this, young women need to get used to doing BSE, so they can have good knowledge about how to do BSE according to the stages. In addition, the research results of Prayogi, Ekayamti, & Daris (2021) show that some respondents claimed they did not memorize the BSE stages and the respondents had no complaints about their breasts, so they often forgot and were lazy to do breast examinations, even though they had received material about BSE.

According to the researchers' assumptions, some young female participants who felt their breasts were in good condition tended to think that BSE was not too important to do. This is one of the factors that makes them express that they often forget and don't have enough time to do BSE. This is in line with the results of research conducted by Milyarona, Romadhon, Kurniati, & Ichsan (2021), which found seven informants who never took the time to do BSE, they said that even though they had time, they did not always take the time to do it.

### **BSE Education Readiness and Needs in Adolescents**

Someone who already has good and sufficient knowledge about breast cancer and its examination tends to have a desire to share the knowledge they have with others in their surroundings. This is in accordance with research conducted by Juwita & Prabasari (2018), which states that respondents who have a positive attitude and do BSE can influence their friends to have positive attitudes and behaviors as well.

In this study, researchers also found that young women's awareness of breast health was in the good category. This is an incentive for them to provide and disseminate education about BSE that they have received before. Young female participants revealed that they did not want their nearest and dearest to get breast cancer, so they were interested in delivering this breast health education. One of the things that teenagers complain about regarding breast health education and BSE that has been given, is that they are not taught to do direct examinations. When socialization takes place, they see and learn only through pictures provided through the website. This makes young women do not fully understand the stages of performing BSE.

According to the researchers' assumptions, the provision of health education using the demonstration method can improve the participants' abilities, because this method involves all the senses to receive information. This assumption is reinforced by the results of previous research by Purwati (2023), whose results show that the level of knowledge increases rapidly after teaching using the demonstration method. Due to the minimal use of language and the greater emphasis on practice, this method can make explanations easier. This allows the subject to be able to understand the procedure clearly. The more the five senses are used, the clearer the understanding will be, so that it can help students to practice BSE properly. The use of tools or visual aids can also support this method.

The use of this method of providing education can be used as a strategy in socializing reproductive health education activities for adolescents. This can be the main focus for educational facilities for young women in schools, such as the UKS or other parties who act as health educators in the school environment. Socialization providers in providing education about BSE can use various methods and available information media, including digital media that are more familiar to today's teenagers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results and discussion that the researchers have described in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the perceptions of young women about BSE by involving five young female participants at SMAN 8 Pekanbaru, obtained three main themes, namely: 1) Digital media as the main source of BSE information, 2) Adolescents' understanding of BSE and 3) The readiness and need for BSE education in adolescents. A good view of young women regarding breast cancer is one of the factors that motivates young women regarding efforts to detect early breast cancer (BSE). There is a need for more effective sexual health education, especially among adolescents who are more familiar, one of which is digital social media. The use of the demonstration method can also be used as a strategy in socializing reproductive health education activities for adolescents. In addition, it was also concluded that most young women have good understanding and motivation regarding BSE.

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