Factors influencing breast cancer screening practices among Arab women living in the State of Qatar

Breast cancer is frequently diagnosed in Arab women living in Qatar. Al Amal Hospital in Doha reported that 20% of cancer cases receiving treatment in 2007 involved the treatment of breast cancer among women. Early detection and treatment can reduce breast cancer morbidity and mortality rates significantly. However, Arab women are often diagnosed at advanced stages of breast cancer. Funded by the Qatar National Research Fund - National Priorities Research Program, we are undertaking a three-phase research program for which the goals are; (1) to understand the breast health experience of Arab women in Qatar, (2) identify and implement strategies that assist women to participate in breast cancer screening activities, and (3) evaluate, facilitate, and sustain the participation of Arab women in breast cancer screening. In phase I of the research program we will conduct two studies.

**Study 1:** This quantitative cross-sectional survey will investigate the participation rate of Arab women in breast cancer screening, their knowledge about breast cancer, barriers and facilitators to participation. Using a structured questionnaire, we will conduct face-to-face interviews with Arab women aged 35 and over in three different cities in Qatar (Doha, Al Wakrah, and Al Khor). Convenient sampling will be used to recruit 753 participants. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be performed using SPSS.

**Study 2:** This qualitative study will gain insight on; 1) how Arabic women view and participate in breast cancer screening activities, 2) how social, cultural, historical, and economic influences affect breast cancer screening for Arab women, the access to screening services, and social support networks in place, and 3) what intervention strategies will increase awareness of early detection and participation in breast cancer screening among Arab women. Purposive sampling will be used. Qualitative in-depth interviews will be individually conducted with Arab women, men, and healthcare providers. Qualitative data analysis will be performed. Although the results are not available at the present time, we will discuss how the information obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative studies will be used to develop culturally appropriate and effective intervention strategies and services to meet the preventative care needs of Arab women living in the State of Qatar with the aim of decreasing the seriousness and prevalence of breast cancer among them.