



Women's Health at St. Thomas
Lutheran Church
in Hilton, SC

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Why Women's Health?

- Breast cancer is the 2nd leading cause of death by cancer in women, following skin cancer.
- According to the National Cancer Institute, 1 in 8 women (13.2%) will be diagnosed with breast cancer.
- One in 33 women will have a chance of dying from breast cancer.

Why Women's Health?

- The cancer incidence for females of all ages in Newberry county is 165.8/100,000.
(S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control, 2000)
- The death rate for females of all ages in Newberry County is 33/100,000. (Bureau of Community Health and Chronic Disease Prevention, 2003)
- These statistics hit close to home for every woman, and measures for early detection are something every woman should know about.

Aims for Better Health

- Community members at St. Thomas Lutheran Church will increase their knowledge in women's health issues, focusing on breast cancer awareness and prevention.
- Community members will learn how to perform the full breast self-exam, following the nationally-accepted guidelines, and will perform the breast self-exam monthly.

How did I do it? Measures

- An increase in knowledge about breast cancer and early detection was assessed in pre- and post-talk questionnaires. Handouts were provided to increase the chance that this new knowledge will be retained for longer periods of time.
- An increase in the number of women willing and able to perform the full breast self-exam was assessed by noting the percentage of women who know how and are willing to perform a monthly exam.

Changes for Improvement

Drivers:

- Women really do have an interest in knowing more about their bodies and how to keep their bodies healthy in the long run.
- Many women are afraid to ask questions about their bodies or do not know what questions to ask.

Changes for Improvement

Barriers in Women's Health:

- Lack of knowledge about the importance of women's health.
- Women are not sure how to do a self-exam and what to look or feel for.
- Doctors do not have enough time in the office to educate patients.

Changes anticipated:

- Women will retain new information on risk factors, early detection and prevention, as well as how to perform the self-exam, through a group education session and a take-home handout.

PDSA Cycle:

What was the Plan?

To hold an education session for the women of St. Thomas Lutheran Church.

- Main focus: breast cancer risk factors, general breast anatomy, cancer detection and the breast self-exam.
- Also included information on cervical cancer and its risk factors, and detection through the Pap smear.

PDSA Cycle: Do

- Invited women of St. Thomas Lutheran Church to an informal talk on August 14, 2005, at 4:00 pm.
- Pre-talk survey asked for knowledge about:
 - Breast cancer statistics -- 1 in 8 females are diagnosed.
 - Do you know how to perform a breast self-exam?
 - Do you perform a MONTHLY self-exam?
 - Do you go to your doctor for a yearly physical, which includes a pap smear?
 - If you are over 40: Do you go to your doctor for a yearly mammogram?

Covering Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

- **Older age
- Early age of first period OR a late menopause
- Older age at the birth of your first child OR if you have never given birth
- Personal history of breast cancer (benign or malignant)
- **Family History
- Hormone use
- Caucasian race
- Obesity
- Drinking alcoholic beverages

Breast Anatomy

I also covered some basic breast anatomy so that the women would understand the makeup of the breast and where lymph nodes are located.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Picture from: <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/screening/breast/Patient/page2>

Important Screening Tests

- Breast self-exam
 - Looking for symmetry, dimpling, retraction.
 - Feeling for lumps, bumps in the breast tissue.
 - Feeling for enlarged lymph nodes.
- Clinical breast exam
 - Emphasizing that women should still have a doctor examine their breasts even if they no longer require a pap smear.
- Mammogram
 - Required for women over 40 y/o.
 - Talked about imaging the breasts and why this is important *in addition to* a clinical breast exam.

What else...

- Passed around a model of a breast with lumps for practice at palpation.
- Talked about cervical cancer:
 - Risk factors, focusing on age, HPV infection, women who have not had a Pap smear, and cigarette smoking.
 - Screening: the Pap smear
 - Indicated at age 18 OR when a woman becomes sexually active, whichever comes first.
 - No longer required after 60 y/o OR if a woman has a total hysterectomy.
- Post-talk survey

PDSA Cycle: Study

Pre-talk survey:

- 3/6 knew that 1 in 8 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.
- 6/6 Knew how to perform a breast self-exam. Through the talk, I found that all of them did NOT know about the 3 different components.
- 3/6 did not perform a monthly self-exam.
- 1/6 did not go to her doctor for a yearly physical exam.
- 5/5 do have a yearly mammogram. (One woman was under the age of 40.)

Study cont'd.

Post-talk survey:

- 6/6 felt that the breast self-exam was explained such that they could do a full exam at home.
- 6/6 said that they will do a MONTHLY self-exam at home.

I also asked how I did:

- 6/6 felt they learned something from the talk.
- 4/6 wish the talk covered a broader range of topics related to women's health, rather than just focusing on breast cancer and the self-exam.

A final section asked for written feedback.

PDSA Cycle: Act

- Future surveys will ask each woman if she knows about a possible family history of breast cancer and if she has ever had breast cancer.
- Include more information on current treatments and prognosis (e.g., metastasis rates) for breast cancer.
- Follow-up with the women's group at St. Thomas about questions I could not answer, as well as additional questions they may have.
- Provide contact information to AHEC for future students' projects and community education opportunities.

Lessons Learned

- Talk with women's groups at 2 or more churches to increase outreach.
- Provide additional valuable questions on survey to increase my knowledge, while keeping questions at a minimum.
- Cover a wider range of women's health issues, while still providing enough information about each in a 1-hour talk.