

## Perception of breast cancer prevention campaigns among women in Braşov

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**Abstract:** *Once health marketing appeared, the concern for its development and for health, generally speaking, has increased, especially as regards the prevention of certain diseases. Health marketing refers to marketing strategies and campaigns aimed not only at healthy individuals, but also at the sick ones. Given that it is easier to prevent a disease and that access to information nowadays is handy, the present paper aimed at analysing opinions and attitudes of women in Brasov regarding prevention campaigns for breast cancer. Based on the information from the quantitative research, conclusions have been drawn concerning the level of knowledge of women in Brasov.*

**Key-words:** *social marketing, health marketing, quantitative research, breast cancer research*

### 1. Introduction

Marketing has gone through various stages to reach the form which it has today. The first stage was the one targeted towards production. By analogy with business marketing, which was founded on the idea of increasing results while reducing costs, in the case of social marketing, one can speak of a growing number of social programmes offered, while driving costs down for both the client and the sponsor of the program (Pralea, 2013).

Health campaigns, although based on behavioural models available, have not had the desired effect in most cases. In addition, most of them were based solely on the communication component, neglecting other issues (Brătucu, Enache and Pralea, 2013).

Healthcare marketing aims at both healthy and sick individuals, which involves the use of differentiated strategies and even the emergence of anti-marketing strategies. The toughest strategies are related to the prevention of serious diseases, incurable until now: cancer and AIDS, where strategies focus on maintaining and preserving health (Brătucu, Ispas, 1999).

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The existence of health marketing strategies is reflected in the image of a healthy population. As a result, the occurrence of marketing in the healthcare field has been imposed by health problems in the human society.

Health marketing can be considered that part of social marketing which aims at the implementation of specific policies and strategies in order to improve population health by causing a behavioural change (French, Stevens, 2010).

The development of health marketing programmes always comes from identifying a problem in the targeted population, and, in order to better respond to this problem, it is necessary to identify barriers regarding people's behavioural changes to prioritize those issues, to select the appropriate tools for change and to test the implementation of the wanted strategy in advance (Griffiths, Blair-Stevens and Thrope, 2008).

Health education is a way to improve the quality of life, being at the same time an alternative for population health and aiming at persuading people to adopt, under certain conditions, a type of behaviour that influences their lifestyle and therefore, improves health (Enăchescu, Mark, 1998).

The statistics in recent years place Romania among the countries of the European Union holding a middle place in terms of the standardized rate of mortality, with the smallest incidence and prevalence rates, but showing a growing trend.

Worldwide, cancer causes one of eight deaths, more than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. Each year, over 12 million people are diagnosed with cancer and 7.6 million people lose their battle with this disease. Without major improvements, many of the preventable and curable cancers will continue to kill. It is estimated that 40% of cancers can be prevented.

Cancer risk can be reduced by some simple steps: varied and healthy alimentation, maintaining normal body weight, regular physical activity, limited alcohol consumption, not smoking and avoiding exposure to passive smoking, avoiding excessive sun exposure, protection against infections which can cause cancer.

Since 2008, a growing number of deaths have been registered based on tumours. This problem has been triggered by the fact that most patients are diagnosed in advanced stages of the disease. Breast cancer is one of the easiest detectable cancers by using non-invasive techniques, and it is also curable once it is discovered in an early stage. For this reason, it has been chosen in this study for a more detailed analysis.

Each year, over 8,000 women are diagnosed with breast cancer in Romania and most of them are detected in an advanced stage when treatment options are minimal. Breast cancer in Romania is the oncological disease with most victims among women.

Generally, awareness campaigns for breast cancer have been extremely effective in getting attention. Breast cancer receives significantly more interest and space in the media as compared to other prevalent cancers.

## 2. Methods used for research

This marketing research considered women in Brasov older than the age of 18 as the sampling population. The women segment was considered representative in this research because its topic is related to breast cancer and this disease is much more developed and encountered with women than men.

Our research focused on issues related to breast cancer and the methods by which it can be prevented, using an inquiry-based survey.

The sampling method which was chosen is the random steps. The analysed sample consisted of 176 people, resulting an error of 7.38%, which guarantees with a confidence level of 95% the representativeness. The validation of the sample was conducted in the group in the age range 31-40 years. This group represents 20.95% of the total studied population.

The processing and analysis of the data from the 1,119 interviews were conducted using the SPSS system (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). This system is used in data processing to obtain useful information for decision-makers. The most common outputs are tables and graphs. The multiple processing possibilities (data grouping, data analysis, statistical tests etc.) offered by this software made it very popular when analysing data for marketing or sociological research (Constantin, 2012).

## 3. Results

**Question No. 1.** Are you aware of any promotion campaigns organized in order to prevent breast cancer?

From all respondents' answers, 28.4% do not know about any promotion campaigns organized in order to prevent breast cancer, 71.6% of the respondents confirmed that they have knowledge of campaigns that have been organized to prevent breast cancer.

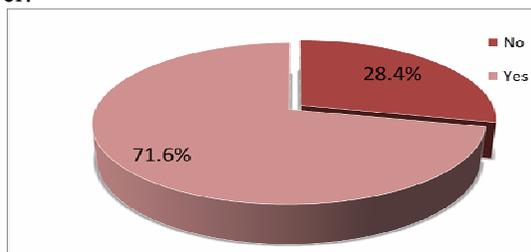


Fig.1. *Graphical representation of people who know about campaigns for preventing breast cancer*

**Question No. 2.** Which are your most important sources of information about breast cancer prevention?

This question was aimed at identifying the most important sources of information used by women in Brasov in order to prevent breast cancer. Internet ranks first with an average of 24.6%, followed by TV ranked second with 23.5%. The third place was held by specialised health professionals, 22%. They are followed by books and magazines with 14.5% of the cases. Friends/ family, radio and newspapers are placed last.

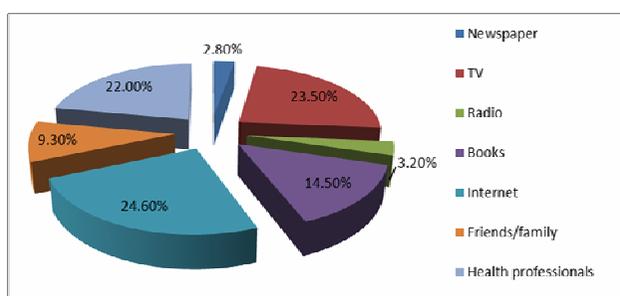


Fig. 2. Sources of information on cancer prevention

**Question No. 3.** What is the frequency of your performing tests and other medical checks?

This question revealed that 40 respondents go medical tests and medical examinations less than every 2 years, meaning a rate of 22.7%. 21 respondents go every two years for medical tests, respectively 11.9%. 44.9% of respondents go once a year to review medical checks, while 15.9% of them go twice a year and 4.5% of women surveyed go to the doctor twice a year. The module is the answer “once a year”.

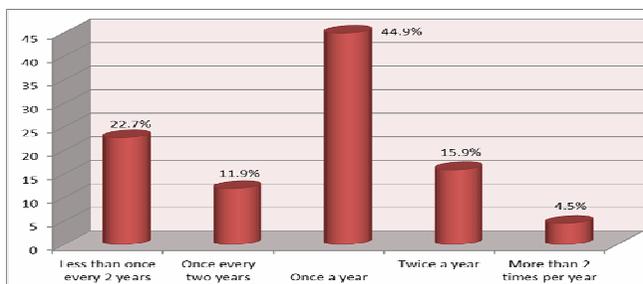


Fig. 3. Distribution of answers on the number of medical examinations carried out

**Question No. 4.** How much money do you spend, on the average, on medical tests and examinations every year?

To have a correct assessment of the resources spent annually by women for medical tests, respondents were asked about the average amount spent every year in order to prevent breast cancer.

This question was analysed by the direct measurement proportional scale and it showed an average of the amounts spent for medical tests and consultations of 477.04 lei. The median for this question was represented by the sum of 300 lei.

**Question No. 5.** Do you self-examine your breasts every month?

The answers to this question were distributed as follows: 60 women answered affirmatively, with a percentage of 34.1%, and 116 responded negatively, with a percentage of 65.9%. The module for this question was the answer with the highest frequency – “No”.

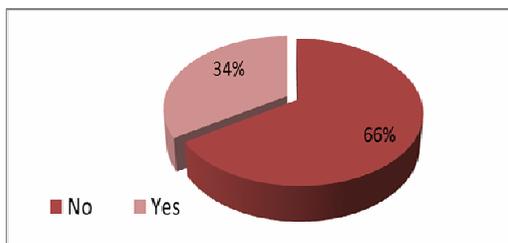


Fig. 4. *Distribution of answers on breast self-examination*

**Question No. 6.** When was the last breast examination performed by a medical specialist?

This question, related to the frequency of breast examinations performed by a medical specialist, considering that the module’s question is the answer "Never", with a percentage of 37.5%.

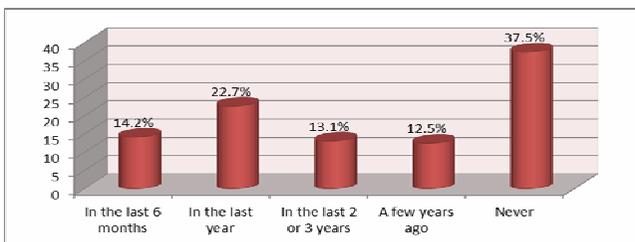


Fig. 5. *Frequency of specialised breast examination*

**Question No. 7.** How do you assess information campaigns and promotion campaigns regarding the prevention of breast cancer?

On a scale from 1 (totally unimportant) to 5 (very important), the average of the responses was 4.32, which means that women from Brasov consider as important

the organized campaigns regarding the prevention of breast cancer. This question's median and mode were the answer 4- Important.

<b>N</b>	<b>Valid</b>	176.00
	Missing	.00
	Mean	4.32
	Median	4.00

Table 1. *Descriptive statistical indicators in the sample*

**Question No. 8.** Please express your opinion in connection to the following statement: "I would go to a specialised breast check-up only if I were to find something wrong".

Regarding the respondents' opinions about specialised breast check-up, we can see big differences. Cumulatively, 42.62% of women declared they would go to a specialised breast check-up only if they found something wrong, 19.32% were not decided in terms of a control for breast cancer and cumulatively, 38.07% would go to a specialised control even if they have not noticed any kind of problems.

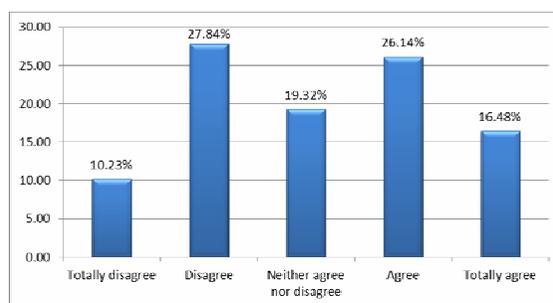


Fig. 6. *Opinions about medical breast examination*

**Question No. 9.** What is your age group?

The age structure of the sample respondents reveals that 4 women were under 20 years of age and 40 (or 22.7%) women were in the 21-30 years age range; 34 women (or 19.3%) were in the 31-40 years old age group; 41 respondents (or 19.3%) belong to the 41-50 years old age group; 27 women, namely 15.3%, were in the 51-60 years old age group; 22 (or 12.5%) women were in the 61-70 years old age; 8 of respondents (4.5%) were aged over 70.

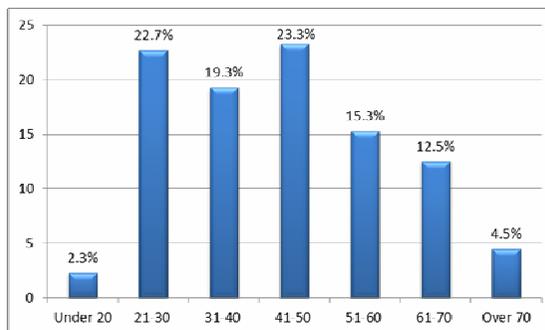


Fig. 7. Respondents' structure by age

#### 4. Conclusions

Following the quantitative research conducted among women in Brasov, a poor concern for healthcare is observed. Doing a leaderboard of the sources of information regarding breast cancer prevention, internet comes first, on the second place we can find the TV and specialised medical staff can be found only on the third place. The further analysis revealed that 44.9% of respondents answered that they were going to medical checks annually, but 22.7% of them go less than once every two years.

Referring to the last breast examination performed by a medical specialist, about 36% of the respondents declared they had had one a year before, while the rest had never received such consultation, or had gone many years before.

Among the researched women it was also found that 42.62% would go to a specialised breast control only if they found something wrong, while in preventing breast cancer, an examination which is done after finding or feeling something, may be delayed. In early stages, breast cancer is asymptomatic and when symptoms appear, the cancer is quite difficult to treat and the chances of curing breast cancer significantly decrease.

The phenomenon of breast cancer is spread all over the world, but these cancer rates could be reduced, especially by creating programs and information campaigns. In conclusion, it is important to develop the healthcare concern. Every woman should know how to control their wellbeing, to protect their lives and learn that going to the doctor is an essential thing that must come naturally, in order to prevent certain diseases.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, according to the World Health Organization. Each year, 1,676,633 new cases are diagnosed worldwide, and over 520,000 women die from the disease.

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