

# Factors associated with the practice of breast self-examination among women in Malaysia: The National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** In 2017-2021, breast cancer was the most common cancer among women with 17.6% of all cancers in Malaysia. Despite the benefits of early detection, which has contributed to saving lives, there is a lack of national data on breast self-examination (BSE) practice in Malaysia. This study aimed to determine the prevalence of BSE and its associated factors among women aged 40 years and above in Malaysia in 2023. **Materials and Methods:** This is a cross-sectional nationwide study with multistage stratified random sampling. Face-to-face interview was conducted using the pre-tested structured questionnaire with 3,610 respondents. Data was analyzed using complex sample analysis for the Chi-squared test and multivariable logistic regression analysis to identify significant association factors with p-value <0.05. **Results:** The overall prevalence of BSE among women aged 40 years and above in Malaysia was 55.5% (95% CI: 53.1, 57.9). Prevalence of BSE was significantly higher among younger women (40-59 years old), urban dwellers, Indian ethnicity, married, private employee, T20 income, physically active, overweight, with history of breast cancer and ever done mammogram. BSE was significantly associated with women who ever had a mammogram (aOR: 3.90, 95% CI: 3.01, 5.06), Indian (aOR: 2.31, 95% CI: 1.18, 4.53) and higher education level (aOR: 2.07, 95% CI: 1.36, 3.15). In addition, age, physical activity, and marital status were significant factors to perform BSE, that is aged 40-59 years old, being physically active, and currently married (aOR: 1.59, 1.35, and 1.34, respectively). **Conclusion:** The overall prevalence shown that not all women practices BSE as early detection of cancer. However, these findings provide information on BSE practice nationwide and may guide the planning of specific screening interventions and strategies in Malaysia. Increasing knowledge and awareness can help women to change their lifestyles and actively practice breast cancer screening with proper techniques, especially among older women and those with lower education.