

Mammogram advocacy and women's health carnival: Healthy women, healthy nation

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ABSTRACT

Summary: Healthy women are vital in developing a healthier nation. However, women are at high risk to develop certain diseases like breast cancer and cervical cancer. According to the National Cancer Registry (2012-2016), the most common cancer among Malaysian women is breast cancer with an incidence of 34.1 per 100,000 population while cervical cancer is the 3rd most common cancer with an incidence of 6.2 per 100,000 population. So, women are entitled for early health screening because early detection saves lives. Kelantan Women's Welfare and Family Development Unit in collaboration with Tumpat District Health Office has organized Mammogram Advocacy and Women's Health Carnival on 18th May 2023. The aim of this carnival is to advocate for women's health, especially breast cancer and cervical cancer screening, as well as health screening for non-communicable diseases like diabetes, dyslipidaemia and hypertension, pre-pregnancy care and mental health awareness. A total of 155 women from Tumpat district participated in this carnival which was held in Tumpat Community Hall from 8:00 am till 1:00 pm. Each participant received a goodie bag containing breast cancer pamphlet, pink ribbon brooch and free meals for breakfast and lunch. The carnival started with morning exercise including Kegel's exercise by physiotherapist, followed by Breast Cancer Awareness Talk by Family Medicine Specialist, Pasir Pekan Health Clinic and then proceeded with launching ceremony by Tumpat District Health Officer. Various exhibitions were set up throughout the carnival like breast cancer screening booth using clinical breast examination and Braster test, cervical cancer screening using Pap Smear and HPV DNA test, pre-pregnancy care counselling, health screening with PEKA B40 registration counter, dental check-up, mental health screening using Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS), and reproductive health exhibition by Reproductive Health Association of Kelantan (ReHAK). Overall, about 35 participants underwent health screening, 77 participants underwent mental health screening, 15 participants registered for pre-pregnancy care clinic, 20 participants underwent the Braster test for breast cancer screening, and another 20 participants underwent the Pap smear or HPV DNA test for cervical cancer screening. The result of the screening revealed 4 participants had abnormal Braster test and were referred for mammogram, whereas 9 participants were diagnosed with severe anxiety, 1 had severe depression, and 2 had severe stress and were referred to the counsellor, while the remainder of the screening revealed normal results. This carnival has successfully raised awareness about women's health among participants by multidisciplinary approach as well as emphasize on prevention, screening, early detection, and treatment. Moreover, using new technology such as the Braster test could increase the number of breast cancer screening among women aged 35 and older in the community.