

Breast Health Perceptions and Screening Behaviors Among Myanmar American Immigrant Women

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OBJECTIVES: To understand and describe attitudes toward general health checkups, breast health knowledge, cultural beliefs, and health-promoting behaviors among Myanmar American immigrant women in the United States.

SAMPLE & SETTING: 267 women participated in the study. 10 women were excluded because of missing data, so the total sample size was 257 participants.

METHODS & VARIABLES: A descriptive, cross-sectional survey design was used to describe and investigate breast health perceptions and behaviors.

RESULTS: Nearly 75% of the study sample reported having negative attitudes toward general health checkups and were found to have less accurate breast health knowledge and more fatalistic views about breast cancer. Only 29% of older women adhered to mammogram recommendations. Younger women reported more barriers to mammograms, and older women reported fewer barriers to mammograms.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING: This study demonstrated the need for additional research focusing on unique perspectives when investigating breast health practices among Myanmar American immigrant women. The findings highlight the essential need to build a strong partnership with stakeholders to combat breast health disparities and address the complex nature of acculturation.

KEYWORDS Myanmar American immigrant women; breast cancer screenings; breast health perceptions
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Globally, women face significant breast cancer burden because it is the most common cancer and the second leading cause of death among women worldwide (Ferlay et al., 2024). In 2022, it was the third leading cause of death in the country of Myanmar (also known as Burma) (Ferlay et al., 2024). Breast cancer burden could worsen where minimal healthcare infrastructure and low prioritization of preventive and oncology care are present (World Health Organization, 2022). Although breast cancer incidence rates in Asian populations have been more favorable than in White populations, the sharp increase in incidence rates among Asian populations globally is of concern (Bao et al., 2018; Morey et al., 2019; Sohn et al., 2021). In the United States, the breast cancer incidence rate has been increasing among Asian American women in the past decade compared to the stable incidence rate in the past decade among non-Hispanic White women (Miller et al., 2019). Breast health disparities in the United States have improved in recent years but have not been eliminated (Sohn et al., 2021). High breast cancer burden may be reduced using early detection and awareness strategies. However, Clough et al. (2013) reported that Asian American immigrant women were less likely to receive routine cancer screenings than White immigrant women. Asian American women were less likely to adhere to mammogram recommendations compared to non-Hispanic White women (Paranjpe et al., 2022). In 2018, compared to the baseline national screening rate of 72.8%, the prevalence of up-to-date mammography screening status among Asian American women demonstrated a much lower percentage (55%) than in non-Hispanic Black (66%) or non-Hispanic White (64%) women (American Cancer Society, 2019). A wide range of screening rates were seen among different Asian American subgroups, with the highest rate seen among Japanese