



A Letter to the Editor Titled “Breast Cancer among Pakistani Women” in the Iran J. Public Health (Vol. 44, No. 4, Apr 2015, pp. 586-587)

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Dear Editor-in -Chief

It comes as a surprise to me that a professional from a university dealing with arid agriculture in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, is the lead author of an article titled ‘Breast cancer among Pakistani women’, published in your esteemed journal, Iran J. Public Health (Vol. 44, No. 4, Apr. 2015, pp. 586-587). The letter clearly reflects that there is little or no scientific basis for what has been stated in it, as described below.

In the first paragraph, the authors have written that ‘Every year, one million women are diagnosed with breast cancer’ and cited Hunter’s paper published in 2000 to support this claim (Reference 1). However, nowhere in Hunter’s article is written that over a million women are diagnosed with breast cancer. It is also a bit disconcerting that the authors should refer to a paper written in 2000, whereas, it is already 2015 now. Further, the next sentence refers to a Globocan 2008 report and gives a figure of about 1.38 million for breast cancer diagnosis among women. Again, it seems as if the authors are completely oblivious of the fact that WHO released the Globocan 2012 cancer estimates in December 2013 and reported a figure of 1.67 million for breast cancer in females, worldwide.

In the second paragraph, the authors have written that ‘Illiteracy is also a major cause of breast

cancer among women because women have no awareness about personal hygienic conditions’. However, there is absolutely no scientific basis to support this statement.

In the third paragraph, the authors have written that ‘In Asia, Pakistan has the highest rate of breast cancer’. The fact is that Pakistan does not have the highest rate in Asia and this again can be confirmed through the Globocan 2012 report. Further, the authors say that ‘In rural areas, rural women are developing a great number of breast cancers every year because it is an inherited disease, which is transmitted from mother to daughter’. Again the facts are different from what has been stated and can be checked online by reviewing several publications that have been made available on breast cancer in Pakistan. Moreover, while talking about breast cancer, the authors choose to include hepatitis C along with breast cancer, without giving any scientific explanation for it, to say that, every year, many women are dying of these two diseases in Pakistan. In the fourth paragraph, the authors say that ‘Mammogram is a screening program,...’. In reality, mammogram is not a screening program; a mammogram is just a mammogram.

In the fifth paragraph, the authors refer to a table showing the results in red and purple colors;

however, there is nothing in these two colors in the table. Further, referring to the table and stating that a cancer is prevailing rapidly and nearing an end, again does not make any sense. In conclusion, I would like to say that disseminating information in this way not only reflects

poorly on the authors, it may also be misleading for many readers. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for the authors to be cautious about the topic that they select, and the approach they use, when preparing articles for publication.

Response

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

I have read attachment and noted all points. My answer is that I have written this letter after studying different reports and articles. Facts which I have mentioned in the letter are taken from different reports and articles published in different eras. The person who is raising objection should see the sequence of paragraph that in step by step facts of different years are describing. And the other thing raised is that the major reason of breast cancer is not illiteracy.

In Pakistan in social context, major reason is illiteracy. Most of the women in rural areas have no knowledge about self-care and I am a social scientist not a medical professional that I wrote scientific reasons of breast cancer. Dr Badar sahib is considered me a health professional. I am a social scientist and investigate the social causes and impact of different health issues not laboratory investigation. Thanks for given me chance to clear my position.