

BT Young Scientist 2009 One Page Proposal

Name:

Age:

Category: Intermediate

Section: Social and Behavioural Sciences

School:

Project Title:

Overview: My project aims to find out what people know about cancer and its prevention and improve awareness.

Background information / Hypothesis

My Gran Aunt Died of cancer, and my mother felt she should have known about it earlier and got treatment as she was always complaining of the open wounds on her back & her breast. The thing is my Mother, who was only in her late 20's at the time, thought they were bed sores as my Gran aunt was very thin - she didn't have knowledge of the early warning signs of cancer. In my project I hope to find out how aware people are of the symptoms to look out for and do they know what they could do to prevent cancer. I also wish to help people become more aware so if they come across the symptoms they will know straight away that it could be cancer and that they should consult a doctor. A study carried out in Victoria, Australia (Ref1) showed that while people knew that detecting cancer early was very important (88% of those surveyed) many did not know what symptoms might be important to look for. The study also showed that 70% indicated they would want to be tested for a cancer even if no treatment were available.

Approach:

To get a statistically significant result I plan to get over 200 volunteers to take a survey asking them questions on their knowledge of cancer and its prevention. The survey will be constructed based on advice which I have received from the Irish Cancer Society and the Marie Keating Foundation. I have met Dr E.Moylan an oncologist in ANY TOWN University Hospital and have also interviewed local medical staff who have advised me on my survey content will initially test the survey with a small population in my local area. When I do my large survey (more than 200 volunteers) I hope to get a fairly even split of male/female populations and the following age categories: less than 18 / 18 - 30 / 30 - 50 / 50+. I wish to determine if knowledge of the subject varies by age and gender. This may assist future population specific advertising and information campaigns. I may try and also get information on the education level and economic background of the volunteers but this may be more difficult. Assuming that I get a large enough population (advice from Mori, an opinion poll company is that I should get at least 30 results per population) I will enter my results in Microsoft Excel and then statistically analyze them using the student T-test & chi # square. Furthermore, I will use Excel again to graph & present my results.

(Ref 1) LIVINGSTON Patricia; WAKEFIELD Melanie; ELWOOD J. Mark - Community attitudes towards the early detection of cancer in Victoria, Australia