

SELF-CONFIDENCE, EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION,  
AND COMPLIANCE WITH BREAST SELF-EXAMINATION  
IN THE ELDERLY FEMALE

AN ABSTRACT OF

A THESIS

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### Abstract

This experimental study compared the differences in level of reported self-confidence and reported compliance in performing monthly breast self-examination (BSE) in elderly females who participated in a BSE teaching session as compared to elderly females who did not. Subjects included women, aged 65 or older (mean age 81.5) living independently in a senior housing development, with at least one breast intact, the use of both hands, and who were able to read and write the English language. Participants were assigned to either small control groups who received no BSE teaching, or to experimental groups who were instructed in one hour sessions on BSE technique using simulated breast models. The Modified Stillman Trotta Questionnaire (MSTQ) (Brailey, 1986) was used to measure frequency and self-confidence in one pre-test, one post-test immediately after teaching, and again after one month. Two independent variables (group and time of testing) and two dependent variables (self-confidence and compliance) were subject to the following statistical analyses: 2X2 mixed factorial, Chi square analysis, and a Cramer's Q. The results of this did not support 3 out of the 4 hypotheses

presented. While it was predicted that the post-test self-confidence scores of the elderly females who participated in the educational intervention session would be significantly higher than their pre-test self-confidence scores, the results of the analysis also showed a similar increase for the elderly women constituting the control group (those not exposed to the educational intervention session). Likewise, it was expected that the reported frequency of monthly BSE would increase significantly for the experimental group, and not for those women in the control group. However, the results of these analyses did not provide support for this hypothesis. The reported frequency of performing BSE increased somewhat in both groups of subjects, the experimental and controls.