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Fatalism, faith and fear: A case study of self-care practice among adults with Type 2 diabetes in urban Malaysia

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JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NURSING

Volume: 27 Issue: 19-20 Pages: 3758-3767

DOI: 10.1111/jocn.14559

Published: OCT 2018

Document Type: Article

[View Journal Impact](#)

Abstract

Aims and objectivesTo explore self-care and self-care support in patients with Type 2 diabetes in urban Malaysia.

BackgroundThe prevalence of Type 2 diabetes in Malaysia and associated long-term and life-changing complications is increasing. With effective self-care and self-care support, severe complications of the condition can be avoided or reduced. Prior to this study, no evidence existed about Malaysian patients' management of the condition or support for self-care from the healthcare system.

DesignA single embedded qualitative case study.

MethodsSemistructured interviews with 18 patients with Type 2 diabetes aged 28-69years, healthcare professionals (n=19), observations (n=13) of clinic appointments from two urban settings in Malaysia and a documentary analysis. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, field notes were made during observations and the data analysed and synthesised within and across case using Framework analysis.

FindingsThree main themes explained self-care and self-care support in Malaysia: fatalism, faith and fear. Patients were fatalistic about developing diabetes they perceived it as inevitable because it is so common in Malaysia. However, faith in God, coupled with fear of the consequences of diabetes, motivated them to engage in self-care practices. The fear was largely induced by diabetes healthcare professionals working in overcrowded clinics, and stretched thinly across the service, who used a direct and uncompromising approach to instil the importance of self-care to avoid severe long-term complications.

ConclusionThis study provided important insight on how people in Malaysia developed diabetes, their responses to the disease and the approach of healthcare professionals in supporting them to engage with self-care.

Relevance to clinical practiceAny future development of self-care programmes in Malaysia needs to recognise the factors that motivate patients to self-care and include components that build self-efficacy.

Keywords

Author Keywords: [adult nursing](#); [case study](#); [diabetes mellitus Type 2](#); [qualitative research](#); [self-care](#)

KeyWords Plus: [MANAGEMENT](#); [PREVALENCE](#); [METAANALYSIS](#); [HYPERTENSION](#); [ADHERENCE](#); [BEHAVIORS](#)

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Funding

Funding Agency	Grant Number
Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education	
International Islamic University Malaysia	

[View funding text](#)

Publisher

WILEY, 111 RIVER ST, HOBOKEN 07030-5774, NJ USA

Categories / Classification

Research Areas: Nursing

Web of Science Categories: Nursing

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