

Diabetes type 2 self-management among Thai Muslim women

* Pranee C Lundberg BSc, PhD, RN,

** Supunnee Thrakul BSc, MS, RN

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Aim. To explore and describe Thai Muslim women's self-management of diabetes type 2.

Background. The importance of diabetes self-management is well recognised. However, research on diabetes self-management in Thailand is limited, and no such research related to Muslim patients with diabetes type 2 has been found.

Methods. An explorative qualitative study using ethnography was conducted. The ethnographic method was based on qualitative interview and participant observation carried out in 2008. Orem's self-care deficit nursing theory provided the theoretical framework. Purposive convenience sampling was used, and twenty-nine women aged 40–80 years participated.

Results. Four themes of self-management among Thai Muslim women with diabetes type 2 emerged, viz., daily life practices (dietary management, exercise, use of medicine, see doctor to follow-up, self-monitoring of blood sugar and use of herbal remedies), impact of the illness (feeling psychological burden of diabetes and struggling to control the disease), everyday life as before (maintaining religious practices and learning to live with the disease) and family support.

Conclusion. The Thai Muslim women suffered from a partial self-care deficit. The results underline the importance of taking religious traditions into account in the care, offering health education that helps patients cope with their disease, involving family members who can reinforce information given to patients, and increasing self-management power and capability of patients.

Relevance to clinical practice. When caring for Thai Muslim women with diabetes type 2, health care professionals should stimulate their patients to adopt a powerful strategy for modifying their daily life behaviour, and they should be aware of the existence of certain problematic behaviour of their patients. It is also important that they understand the roles of cultural background, religious tradition and family as parts of the basis for educational strategies aimed at helping patients successfully integrate disease management into their lives.