

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Type 2 diabetes: how do Thai Buddhist people with diabetes practise self-management?

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Abstract

Aims. This paper is a report of a study of how Thai Buddhist people with type 2 diabetes practice self-management.

Background. The importance of diabetes self-management is recognized in the literature. However, research on self-care management in Thailand, in particular concerning Buddhist people with type 2 diabetes, is scarce.

Methods. A descriptive qualitative study was conducted. Purposive convenience sampling was used, and thirty men and women with diabetes, aged 28–79 years, participated. Data were collected from June to August 2009 and analysed by use of manifest and latent content analysis.

Findings. Five themes of self-management among Thai Buddhist people with type 2 diabetes were identified: cultural influence on disease control, Buddhism and Thai culture, struggle for disease control, family support and economy a high priority.

Conclusion. Even though the Buddhist people with diabetes had certain self-management capabilities, many had poor control of their blood sugar levels and needed assistance. Reference to Buddhist moderation can be an effective means of helping the people with diabetes better manage their disease and change their lifestyles. In addition to cultural and religious traditions, family, economy and social environment should be taken into account both in the care and in interventions aimed at helping people with diabetes cope and empowering them to control their disease.

Keywords: nursing, self-management, Thai Buddhist people with diabetes, type 2 diabetes

Introduction

Diabetes is a large and growing global health problem. The number of people with diabetes has increased rapidly over the past decade. The global prevalence of diabetes in adults was estimated at 4.0% in 1995 and 4.2% in 2000 (171 million), and is estimated to rise to 5.4% (300 million) by 2025 (King

et al. 1998, Wild *et al.* 2004). In Thailand, the national prevalence of diabetes in adults in 2000 was 9.6%, while those with impaired fasting plasma glucose levels were 5.4%. Around half of all cases were undiagnosed (Aekplakorn *et al.* 2003). More than 95% of all cases of diabetes in Thailand are type 2 diabetes, the complications of which are a major health concern. The most commonly reported complications