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## Religion and self-management of Thai Buddhist and Muslim women with type 2 diabetes.

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#### Abstract

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:** To report of a qualitative study of how religion affects the self-management of Thai Buddhist and Muslim women with type 2 diabetes.

**BACKGROUND:** The importance of diabetes self-management is well recognised. However, research on such self-management in Thailand is scarce, in particular on the influence of religion on the self-management of Thai Buddhist and Muslim women with type 2 diabetes.

**DESIGN:** A descriptive qualitative study was conducted.

**METHODS:** Purposive convenience sampling was used, and 48 women, 19 Buddhist and 29 Muslim, aged from 28-80 years, participated. Data were collected in 2008-09 and analysed by use of manifest and latent content analysis.

**RESULTS:** Four themes of the influence of religion on the self-management among Thai women with type 2 diabetes emerged: religion - a way of coping with diabetes, spiritual practice - a help for disease control, spiritual practice - an effort to struggle with everyday life, and support from family - a cultural practice.

**CONCLUSIONS:** The Buddhist and Muslim women had self-management capabilities that were often related to their religions. However, many of them had poor control of their blood sugar levels and needed assistance.

**RELEVANCE TO CLINICAL PRACTICE:** Reference to religion and spiritual practice can be an effective means of helping diabetes patients better manage their disease and change their lifestyles. Furthermore, family and economic and social environments should be taken into account both in care and in interventions aimed at helping patients cope and empowering them to control their disease.

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