

Experiences of Patients on Natural Herbal Treatments for Diabetes Mellitus at the Diabetes Clinic in General Hospital Matara

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Prevalence of diabetes mellitus is increasing and is becoming a serious threat to human health in all parts of the world. Using natural herbal treatments for type 2 diabetes mellitus has become popular among patients. This research aims to explore the experiences of patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus who use natural herbal treatments. This is a qualitative non-experimental phenomenological study. Twelve participants from both genders between 25- 75 years who were on treatment for Type 2 diabetes mellitus were selected on purposive sampling. In-depth interviews were conducted at the diabetes clinic in General Hospital Matara after getting the ethical approval from the ethics review committee of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna. A thematic, colossus analysis was carried out to identify the patterns within the data. Six main themes as financial constraints, high availability and easy access, family member's encouragement, availability of the information through media, favorable attitude and beliefs on herbs and their safety to the body were identified under three major themes, psychosocial, physical and socio economical experiences. The majority of the sample was identified as they were motivated to use natural herbal treatments other than drugs treatments. Social stigma, low cost, availability, family and relatives' past positive experiences were identified as the most affected factors for the usage of herbal treatments. The need for educational interventions on herbal treatments, training of health care workers and proposing of an integration of herbal medicine into the current medical system are recommended.

Keywords: Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, Herbal treatments, Patients' experiences