

ABSTRACT

Observations of self-care, compliance and family support among in-patients with diabetes and hypertension at the University Hospital of the West Indies

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A point assessment study was conducted to report on self-care activities observed from an accidental chunk sample of 41 diabetic and hypertensive patients admitted on the wards of the University Hospital of the West Indies.

Patients followed recommended diet and exercise programmes, and drug therapy with varying degrees of compliance. Some patients exhibited self-motivated behaviour by monitoring their condition(s) through urinalysis, blood glucose testing, and blood pressure monitoring, although not specifically advised to do so by their physicians.

Exercise, as a control measure, was not often recommended by doctors, especially for hypertensive patients.

Levels of compliance with medication were high in comparison with those stated in the literature. However, non-compliance was not readily predictable with respect to patients' age, knowledge of illness, family encouragement, or medical facilities utilized.

It appeared that the majority of patients were trying hard to maintain good health, in spite of their illness.

The main limiting factors to this study were time constraints and the unrepresentativeness of the sample.

It is recommended that the health services and health care workers review their approach to dealing with patients with diabetes and hypertension with a view to strengthening the non-pharmacologic aspects of management. Patients need to be enabled to consciously and actively participate in the treatment and management of their illness so that the burden of these diseases on both the individual, and the Jamaican economy can be reduced.