

ABSTRACT

Factors that impact on self-care practices of patients with diabetes mellitus at two selected health centres in Jamaica.

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This cross-sectional study was conducted to identify the factors that impact on self-care practices of patients with diabetes mellitus. Self-care practices in relation to demographic data, knowledge of the disease and social support were examined.

Data was obtained from a purposive sample of one hundred and twenty-eight (128) patients with diabetes mellitus. The respondents were over the age of 20 years and were diagnosed with diabetes mellitus for more than one (1) year.

A forty-two (42) item questionnaire consisting of closed and open-ended questions were used as an interview schedule to obtain the data. The SPSS 11.0 programmes, chi-square and correlation, were used to analyze the data. Two focus group sessions were also conducted and the data were analyzed manually.

Based on the findings of the study, it was deduced that age, gender, education, employment, knowledge and social support impacted positively on self-care practices. The self-care practices that were positively impacted included treatment compliance, exercise, diet, dental care, eye care, foot care and reading about

diabetes mellitus.

Strategies for improvement must include educational interaction of health care providers and patients with diabetes mellitus. It is also recommended that:

- Further studies be conducted to examine the patients' understanding of diabetes mellitus in order that appropriate health promotion strategies could be developed and implemented.
- Nursing personnel should become more involved in counselling patients with diabetes mellitus. Training should be provided where necessary.
- Patient education programmes be developed or strengthened to include strategies for the improvement of self-care practices in patients with diabetes mellitus and their families.
- Emphasis be placed on the involvement of the nutritionist or dietitian in dietary counselling that reflects the cultural habits of the individuals with diabetes.
- A register of all patients with diabetes mellitus must be compiled and maintained at each health centre.

Keywords: Daly, Sonia; Diabetes mellitus; Self-care practices