

Barriers to Self-care for People with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus: a Descriptive Cross-sectional Study

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Introduction

Due to its complexity, type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) requires people to adopt different self-care behaviors. The domains of self-care: medication adherence, blood glucose testing, diet, physical activity, and self-monitoring are essential in its management.¹ Identifying barriers to self-care is crucial to controlling T2DM.²

Objective

Identify the main barriers to self-care for people with T2DM.

Methods

A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted between September 2022 and March 2023 in a primary healthcare setting, involving 365 people with T2DM. Data was collected using a questionnaire, categorized based on the COM-B model of behavior (B) change (capability (C), opportunity (O), and motivation (M))³, and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results

Of the sample, 66.9% (n=244) reported barriers in at least one of the self-care domains. Diet (58.5%) and physical activity (47.2%) were the most reported barriers. For diet, *psychological capability* (lack of knowledge) accounted for 12.3%, and *automatic motivation* (lack of will) for 22.7%. For physical activity, *physical capability* (pain, age) was the most frequently mentioned barrier (21.4%), followed by the category of *automatic motivation* (lack of will) with 14.5%. In medication management (6.9%), *psychological capability* (forgetfulness) was reported by 5.9%, and *physical opportunity* (access to the prescription) by 1.1%. In the self-monitoring domain, *psychological capability* (lack of knowledge) was the most common barrier (3.9%), and in blood glucose testing, *automatic motivation* (fear) was 6.3%.

Conclusion

Knowledge of the barriers to self-care in T2DM enables the development of targeted interventions by health professionals and informed health policies. This study provides a substantial, person-centered contribution to positively impacting the management and metabolic control of T2DM.

Keywords

Self-care; Type II Diabetes Mellitus; Barriers; Cross-Sectional Study; Behavior Change Techniques.

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