

The Impact of Type Two Diabetes and Comorbid Conditions on Self-Identity and Self-Management Practices

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Abstract : A diagnosis of a chronic condition, including Type 2 diabetes can significantly impact an individual's self-identity which in turn can have considerable implications on how they adapt to, and self-manage their condition. This paper reports on the findings from a qualitative PhD study of forty participants diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes mellitus and comorbid conditions. The primary objective of the study explored the impact conditions had on self-identity and the relationship with self-management practices. Participants were recruited from a larger study which explored the effectiveness of a therapeutic intervention on glycemic control. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed utilising a narrative thematic analysis methodological approach including a transitional conceptual framework. The majority of participants experienced a loss of their normal self and struggled to integrate diabetes and comorbid conditions into their self-identity. Acceptance, knowledge and integration of conditions were often found to directly influence self-management practices with individuals commonly experiencing four transitional phases from the onset of diagnosis. Successful negotiation of these four phases was influenced by a range of variables which also impacted on an individual's self-identity and in turn their self-management practices.

Keywords : comorbidity, type two diabetes, self-identity, self-management

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