

Health Literacy for Self-Care by Female Patients Diagnosed with Diabetes at a Selected Hospital in Limpopo Province of South Africa

Authors : Nditsheni Ramakuela, Sonto Maputle, Base Khoza, Augustine Tugli

Abstract : Inadequate health literacy can cause difficulties in understanding and compliance to treatment plan. With diabetic condition, self-care activities include behaviours of following a diet plan, avoiding high fat foods, increased exercise, self-glucose monitoring, and foot care. Patients with poor health literacy have difficulty interpreting medication warning labels, following directions on a prescription label and identifying their medications. Difficulties in understanding and performing self-care and health-related activities may ultimately lead to poor health outcomes. The study explored and described factors affecting health literacy and self-care to diabetic regimen by female patients at selected hospital in Limpopo Province of South Africa. Qualitative and explorative research design was used. Female patients who were admitted and diagnosed with diabetes in female medical ward constituted the study population. Non-probability, purposive sampling was used to select 20 female patients diagnosed with diabetes, who were above 18 years and admitted during April-November 2014. An in-depth face-to-face, unstructured interview was used to collect data. Data were analysed using open coding method. Measures to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations were adhered to. Findings revealed factors affecting health literacy for diabetic self-care activities amongst patients were; patient, family, disease and facility related. Proposed recommendations were; to strengthen diabetes education and patient-provider partnership. This is important and must be transferred to strengthen self-care activities to fully benefit the patient.

Keywords : compliance, diabetes mellitus, diabetic regimen, health literacy, self activities

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