

Thesis Title A Study on Health Service Seeking Process of Women With
Diabetes Mellitus in The North -Eastern Region

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Date of Graduation 30 May B.E. 2540 (1997)

Abstract

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is a chronic disease increasingly found in women. One of problems often found in women with DM is that most of them have developed complications before seeking appropriate health service.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process of health service seeking of women with DM. The subjects were 260 women with DM receiving health service at the Nakornphanom and Sappasittiprasong Ubolrachathani Hospitals.

The data were collected using semistructured interview guidelines constructed by the investigator. Data were analysed by grouping and presented in quantitative analysis. The results of the study were as follow:

The majority of subjects (60%) were 40-60 years old, married (77.7%), primary educational level (96.9%), and 60.4% of the subjects earned income between 1,001-3,000 baht per month. Most of the subjects (60.6%) performed two roles. Forty-five point four percent have had DM for one to five years. There were 3 steps of health service seeking process as follow:

Step 1 Illness Recognition , Symptom Definition , and Management

There were 18 symptoms recognized by the subjects. The first three most frequent symptoms were polyuria (48.1%), polydipsia (41.2%), and fatigue (26.2%). In defining the symptoms, 37.7% of the women with DM noticed unusual symptoms occurred but did not have the idea of what they were. Only 15.4% of the subjects suspected they had DM.

More than half of the subjects waited before taking further steps of treatment (50.4%), 30.8% performed self treatment. Forty-one point two percent of the subjects waited and performed self treatment for 1-6 months.

Step 2 Selection of Health Service Agency

For the selection of health service agency, women with DM sought advice from family members (82.3%) before going for health service. The subjects went to different agencies for health service prior to coming to the present government hospital. These agencies were private clinics, community hospitals, general hospitals, university hospitals, health centers, private drugstores, and traditional medical centers.

The reasons underlying the selection of health service agencies were the suggestion from others (50.9%), proximity and transportation accessibility (22.8%). The reasons for coming to the present government hospital were suggestion from others (69.2%) and hospital reputation (16.2%).

Step 3 Evaluation and Changing of Health Service Agency

The subjects received an evaluation of the health care service prior to going to the present government hospital. The study revealed that almost half of the subjects (45.6%) perceived the worsening of their illness. For reason underlying their decision in changing from previous agency to the present government hospital were the advantage of the welfare program (36.8%) and in some cases, "getting worse" (26.3%).

From the result of the study, the investigator suggested that nurses need to provide knowledge and information regarding DM to women and families. This is to inform them of appropriate steps they should take in order to get appropriate health service at an early phase of the disease.