**Method**

**Study Design**
- Qualitative study using semi-structured interviews (focus group discussion (FGD) dan in-depth interviews (IDI))

**Study Centres**
- Purposively sampled 2 public primary care clinics and 5 private clinics from both urban and rural areas in Selangor.

**Participants**
- Patients aged 30 years and older diagnosed with T2DM for more than 2 years, family members and healthcare providers

**Assessment**
- 29 interview sessions (26 IDI and 3 FGD) transcribed verbatim, quality checked and thematically analysed. Constant comparisons were used to identify common themes.

**Additional Information**


Low LL. Determining types of treatment to be adopted by patients with type 2 diabete mellitus in a primary care setting: A grounded theory approach/ Low Lee Lan (Doctoral dissertation, University of Malaysia).


**Acknowledgements**

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**Conflict of interest**

There is no conflict of interest.

**Keywords**

Type 2 diabetes mellitus, family members, peers, health care providers, social media, primary care setting, qualitative study, Malaysia

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**RESEARCH HIGHLIGHT**

**Determining Types Of Treatment To Be Adopted By Patients With Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus In A Primary Care Setting: A Grounded Theory Approach**

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**How To Influence Patient’s Diabetes Management?**

**Issue**

The prevalence of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) is on the rise. Treating T2DM can be costly but can be reduced if there is good diabetes management among patients with T2DM.

Good diabetes management is important in achieving better quality of life and reducing diabetes complications. The patients’ help-seeking behaviour has huge impact on their diabetes management which can be influenced by social networks (Family members, friends, peers, health care professional (HCPs) and social media).

Patients’ help-seeking behaviour can be affected by the social influence. The impact of social influences on patients’ diabetic management is significant. This research aims to highlight the factors affecting degree of impact from social influences on patients’ diabetic management.

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**Key Messages**

- Social networks act as the source of information and influence the patients’ decision-making in choosing their diabetes treatment.

- The impact of social influences depends on the relationship, the level of trust and perception on how they were care for.

- Good HCP-patient relationship in diabetes care should be emphasized.
This research highlight series is based on research done by the institute and its collaborators on health systems issues in Malaysia.

**Background**

The prevalence of T2DM among adults aged 30 years old and above has increased from 14.9% in 2006 to 20.8% in 2011. This could cause heavy economic burden to the government as treating T2DM is a lifelong process.

T2DM needs good glycemic control with medication and lifelong lifestyle adjustment. Patients with help-seeking behavior tend to experiment with different treatments and search information from people around them for treatments and diabetes management.

There is a gap in knowledge on how the patients’ decision-making on choice of treatment and diabetes management is affected by social influences.

**Key Considerations**

**For Primary Health Care Providers and Pharmacists:**
- To develop good interpersonal skills
- To develop good communication skills

**For Policy Makers:**
- To provide sufficient training for health care providers to improve their communication and interpersonal skills with patients
- To emphasize the importance of trust between health care providers and patients

**For Medical Education Providers:**
- To emphasize efficient interpersonal skills in the medical academic curriculum so that medical students can develop good communication skills with patients.

**Key Finding**

- The social influences are the source of information which can significantly affect on how patients choose their diabetes treatment and manage their diabetes (refer Figure 1).
- The treatment characteristics are the key information which patients sought from people surrounding them.
- The impact of social influences depends on strength of relationship, level of trust and perception on how the patients are cared for (refer Figure 2).
- Patients are easily influenced by information obtained from person who had a good relationship with them. HCPs therefore need to emphasize on good interpersonal skills to develop good HCP-patient relationship.

**Findings**

![Figure 1: Sources of social influences](image1)

- I keep on reading about diabetes in the internet. The American Association of Diabetic.
- Social media
- Health care provide
- My friend also has diabetes. She drinks bitter gourd tea, says it is good, I want to try.
- Friends & peers
- Sources of social influences
- I told them (public HCPs), but it seems that what I had said had fallen on deaf ears. That’s the reason why, sometime I would rather go to the private.
- My wife was sad. She told me it was better I went [to seek treatment]. So, my wife asked me to go to hospital.
- As for me, I’m not depressed since I got an early warning, therefore I’m kind of getting ready, I think I’ve got a lot of support. Also support among friends.
- Teamwork, because we both have [diabetes]. I told her from my experience, I told that don’t stop taking the clinic medicine. I want her to have the best.
- Doctors who just keep quiet, and straightaway write down diabetes is severe and need to increase the dosage. Never
- Normally, my wife is the one who goes to ask.
- Family member

![Figure 2: Degree of impact of social influences](image2)

- Perception of being cared for
- Receiving support from a caring person would result in a positive feeling, which would lead to a sense of security and would further motivate patients to readily accept advice on treatment options.

- Strength of relationship
- A closer or stronger relationship would make patients to accept the information given easily.

- Level of trust
- Trust could drive patients to believe, accept, and follow-up on the advice and suggestion given to them.

- Increasing degree of social influence
- Sometimes it’s those people suffering from diabetes who tell us: “I eat this, I buy this, I buy that.” So, we also give them a try.

- Increasing degree of social influence
- I do not trust the doctor. I really do not trust the doctor … now my doctor is her [patient’s wife] … I have to depend on her.

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