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Beliefs Behaviors Modifications of Type 2 Diabetes Self-management Among African American Women

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Among African Americans, behaviors and beliefs about management of disease constitute an important component of self-management of type 2 diabetes (diabetes mel-litus). The purpose of this study was to explore and identify health beliefs and health behaviors affecting diabetes self-management among African American women with type 2 diabetes. Twenty-five African American women aged 46 to 87 years, participated in the study. Community-based women in Pinellas County, Florida, completed semistructured, in-depth interviews, a self-management questionnaire, and a demographic profile. Participant observation occurred at a cross-section of 5 diabetes self-management education classes. Participants were asked about nutritional changes, physical activity, medication use, blood glucose monitoring, physician-patient interaction, support systems, and patient education/knowledge. Findings indicated that a majority of participants used regular exercise, medications, and dietary modifications as a core components model of diabetes self-management. Successful self-management was affected by diabetes beliefs, types of behaviors initiated, and available support systems and resources. Difficulties experienced that affected behavioral outcomes included access to care, costs of medications, pain, testing supplies, and nutritional changes. Findings suggest that modifications to the recommended regimen support or impede participants' efficient self-management of clinically recommended behaviors. Thus, for African American women managing type 2 diabetes, the regimen may necessitate modification models of diabetes self-management, day-to-day behavioral lifestyle adjustments to the biomedically recommended self-management regimen.

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Keywords

African Americans; women's health; diabetes; minority health; health disparities

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