

# Review of: "Older People with Diabetes Mellitus and Considerations for Diabetes Nurse Educators in Brunei"

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**Potential competing interests:** The author(s) declared that no potential competing interests exist.

## General comments

This is an interesting study done in Brunei about the issues associated with elderly diabetic population. As the authors rightly pointed out there are many issues that are specific to diabetes and some associated with ageing. In the elderly, the issues could be categorized as general, physical, disease associated, emotional and psychological issues. IN addition, problems that may set in du to the use of medicines prescribed for their diabetes and other diseases that the patients may have. For instance, many elderly diabetics may have prostate hypertrophy and its associated urinary problems and sometimes secondary renal problems. Similarly, some of them may have cardiac problems including chronic heart failure. In addition, some of these elderly diabetics are more prone to infections due to age and associated uncontrolled diabetes. Thus, it is important to look at these elderly diabetics in a comprehensive and holistic manner to manage them. In this context, not only educating the patient but also their family members and friends is important. In addition to managing their clinical condition, it is important to give them emotional and psychological support. Involving these elderly diabetics in relaxing sports activities such as chess, carroms, playing cards to pass time and develop friendship with others is important. Those who are active and are able to engage in mild to moderate physical activity need appropriate activities like walking, gardening, and even doing carpentry, electrical and sewing type of activities that keep them not only engaged abut also help them to remain activity both physically and emotionally.

## Specific to nursing care needed for elderly diabetics

For those elderly diabetics who are not very active physically, need to be given mild to moderate exercises, physiotherapy, and are need to be attended by trained nurses. These nurses should be trained about treating hypoglycemia, wound care, giving physiotherapy and looking at the general health of the patients. Thus, these nurses should be trained appropriately not just in nursing care but also in management of diabetes such that the patients get adequate care before they are attended to by the concerned physician(s). These nurses ay also need training in minor surgical procedures such as wound debridement, suturing, removing corns, and administration of medicines by intravenous route. For instance, some of these patients may need infusions of vasodilators such as prostaglandin E1 for proper wound healing, antibiotics to treat infections, and in an emergency situation to administer dopamine. It will be good if these nurses are rained adequately as to how to use defibrillators, take ECGs and interpret them whether they are normal or abnormal, and administer sorbitrate/nitrates if needed.

## Final comments

This is an interesting subject on which the authors have dealt with quite broadly. It is important that in a country like Brunei where the incidence of diabetes and obesity are high, the support services need to be well organized with trained and experienced nursing staff.