

Nursing Strategies To Improve Medication Adherence In Patients With Diabetes

Munawir Faleh F Alshammari¹, Nawal Buniah A Alshammar², Hanadi Hamdan S Aldhafeeri³, Mashael Sayer H Alenazi⁴, Ahood Nughaymish Almutiari⁵, Enad Noman Al-Dhafeeri⁶, Ahmed Ardini Al –Mutairi⁷, Fahd Nada Al-Mutairi⁸, Manal Musaad Al-Mutairi⁹, Bader Nughaymish Almutairi¹⁰, Maryam Rifaa Al-Shammari¹¹, Saif Shehab Alotaibi¹²

Abstract

Medication adherence is a critical component of effective diabetes management, and nurses play a vital role in promoting adherence through various strategies. This literature review examined current evidence on nursing interventions to improve medication adherence in patients with diabetes. Key strategies identified include patient education and self-management support, motivational interviewing, technology-based interventions, collaborative care models, addressing social and cultural factors, continuous quality improvement, and interprofessional education and collaboration. These evidence-based approaches have been shown to significantly improve medication adherence, glycemic control, and self-care behaviors among patients with diabetes. However, challenges such as inadequate staffing, lack of specialized training, and inconsistent protocols can hinder optimal implementation. Further research is needed to refine and standardize nursing interventions for enhancing medication adherence and improving outcomes for individuals with diabetes.

Keywords: diabetes, medication adherence, nursing interventions, patient education.

Introduction

Medication nonadherence is a widespread problem among patients with diabetes that negatively impacts health outcomes. Approximately 50% of patients with diabetes do not take their medications as prescribed (World Health Organization [WHO], 2003), leading to poor glycemic control and increased risk of complications such as heart disease, stroke, neuropathy, and kidney disease (Ho et al., 2006). Numerous factors influence medication adherence in diabetes, including complexity of treatment regimens, cost of medications, forgetfulness, lack

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1. Directorate Of Health Affairs In Arar
 2. Nurse, Directorate Of Health Affairs In Arar
 3. Nurse, Directorate Of Health Affairs In Arar
 4. Nurse, Directorate Of Health Affairs In Arar
 5. Nursing , Al-Qaisumah Hospital
 6. Nurse Directorate Of Health Affairs In Hafar Al-Batin
 7. Nurse Directorate Of Health Affairs In Hafar Al-Batin
 8. Nursing , Health Cluster ,Hafar Al-Batin Central Hospital
 9. Nursing , Al-Nuzha Health Center, Hafar Al-Batin
 10. Nursing , Health Cluster, Hafar Al-Batin Central Hospital
 11. Nursing Directorate Of Health Affairs In Hafar Al-Batin,
 12. Nursing , Nafi General Hospital

of knowledge about the condition, and mental health issues. Although medications are critical for managing diabetes, barriers to adherence must be addressed through comprehensive, multidisciplinary interventions (Cramer, 2004).

Nurses are well-positioned to promote medication adherence in patients with diabetes given their role in education, counseling, and care coordination. However, there is variability in nursing practices aimed at improving adherence, and standardized, evidence-based approaches are needed (American Diabetes Association, 2021). The purpose of this literature review is to examine studies on nursing strategies that have been shown to enhance medication adherence among patients with diabetes. Inclusion of recent, high-quality research can help identify core components of effective nursing interventions. Dissemination of best practices may assist nurses in developing standardized adherence protocols tailored to individual patient needs. Ultimately, implementation of evidence-based nursing strategies could significantly improve health outcomes for the growing population of individuals living with diabetes.

Methodology:

We conducted a literature review on nursing strategies to improve medication adherence in patients with diabetes. Searches were performed in PubMed, CINAHL, and Cochrane Library databases for relevant studies published between 2010-2022. Search terms included "diabetes," "medication adherence," "nursing interventions," "patient education," and "self-management." Initial searches yielded 248 articles, which were screened for inclusion based on relevance to the topic. After removing duplicates and papers that did not meet the criteria, 65 articles remained for full-text review.

Ultimately, 38 studies were selected for inclusion in this review based on quality of evidence and relevance to key aspects of nursing interventions for improving medication adherence in diabetes. Included studies utilized methodologies such as randomized controlled trials, cohort studies, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses. The final pool of selected articles was analyzed to summarize current evidence on effective nursing strategies for enhancing medication adherence in patients with diabetes. Data extracted included specific nursing interventions, patient outcomes, barriers to adherence, and recommendations for practice.

Literature Review:

The reviewed literature highlights the crucial role of nurses in promoting medication adherence among patients with diabetes. Key nursing strategies identified include patient education and self-management support, motivational interviewing and behavioral interventions, technology-based interventions, collaborative care models, addressing social and cultural factors, continuous quality improvement, and interprofessional education and collaboration.

Patient education and self-management support, through diabetes self-management education (DSME) programs and self-monitoring tools, were found to significantly improve medication adherence, glycemic control, and self-care behaviors. Motivational interviewing techniques and behavioral interventions, such as reminder systems and social support, were also effective in enhancing adherence.

The integration of mobile health (mHealth) technologies, such as smartphone apps and wearable devices, facilitated self-monitoring, provided medication reminders, and enabled real-time communication with healthcare providers, positively impacting adherence. Collaborative care models involving nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and other specialists improved communication, reduced fragmentation of care, and provided comprehensive support to patients.

Addressing social, cultural, and financial barriers to adherence, continuous quality improvement efforts, and interprofessional education and collaboration were identified as essential components of a comprehensive approach to promoting medication adherence in patients with diabetes.

Discussion

Diabetes is a chronic metabolic disorder characterized by elevated blood glucose levels resulting from defects in insulin secretion, insulin action, or both (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Effective management of diabetes requires a multifaceted approach, including lifestyle modifications, regular monitoring of blood glucose levels, and adherence to prescribed medications (American Diabetes Association, 2021). However, medication adherence remains a significant challenge for many patients with diabetes, leading to suboptimal glycemic control and increased risk of complications (Garcia-Perez et al., 2013). Nurses play a crucial role in promoting medication adherence among patients with diabetes through various strategies, including patient education, motivational interviewing, technology-based interventions, and collaborative care models (Boels et al., 2017; Carpenter et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2015; Machen et al., 2019; Tshiananga et al., 2012).

Patient Education and Self-Management Support

Patient education is a foundational nursing strategy for improving medication adherence in patients with diabetes. Nurses should provide comprehensive education on the importance of medication adherence, proper administration techniques, and potential side effects (American Diabetes Association, 2021). A systematic review by Tshiananga et al. (2012) found that diabetes self-management education (DSME) interventions led to significant improvements in medication adherence, glycemic control, and self-care behaviors. Nurses can deliver DSME through individual or group sessions, using a variety of teaching methods, such as verbal instruction, written materials, and demonstrations (American Diabetes Association, 2021).

In addition to education, nurses should support patients in developing self-management skills, such as goal setting, problem-solving, and self-monitoring (American Diabetes Association, 2021). A systematic review by Loveman et al. (2003) concluded that patient education models for diabetes that incorporate self-management support are clinically and cost-effective in improving glycemic control and medication adherence. Nurses can encourage patients to use self-monitoring tools, such as medication logs or smartphone apps, to track their medication intake and identify potential barriers to adherence (Boels et al., 2017).

Motivational Interviewing and Behavioral Interventions

Motivational interviewing (MI) is a patient-centered counseling approach that aims to elicit behavior change by exploring and resolving ambivalence (Miller & Rollnick, 2013). Nurses can use MI techniques to assess patients' readiness for change, identify barriers to medication adherence, and collaborate with patients to develop personalized strategies for improvement (Carpenter et al., 2015). A systematic review by Omran et al. (2012) found that pharmacist interventions using MI techniques significantly improved adherence to oral antidiabetic medications in people with type 2 diabetes.

In addition to MI, nurses can implement other behavioral interventions to improve medication adherence, such as reminder systems and social support (Mayberry & Osborn, 2012). A systematic review by Vervloet et al. (2012) found that electronic reminder systems, such as SMS text messages, significantly improved medication adherence in patients with type 2 diabetes. Nurses can collaborate with patients to identify the most effective and acceptable

reminder methods based on their individual preferences and needs. Family and social support have also been shown to positively influence medication adherence in patients with type 2 diabetes (Mayberry & Osborn, 2012).

Technology-Based Interventions

The increasing availability of mobile health (mHealth) technologies provides new opportunities for nurses to support medication adherence among patients with diabetes (Huang et al., 2015). mHealth interventions, such as smartphone apps and wearable devices, can facilitate self-monitoring, provide medication reminders, and enable real-time communication between patients and healthcare providers (Huang et al., 2015). A systematic review and meta-analysis by Huang et al. (2015) found that telecare interventions significantly improved glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes compared to usual care. Nurses can recommend and assist patients in selecting appropriate mHealth tools based on their individual needs, preferences, and technological literacy.

Telemedicine is another technology-based strategy that can support medication adherence in patients with diabetes (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Lee et al. (2020) conducted a cluster-randomized controlled trial examining the effects of telemonitoring and team-based management on glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes. Although the study did not find a significant difference in HbA1c levels between the telemonitoring and usual care groups, the authors highlighted the potential of telemedicine to enhance patient engagement and self-management. Nurses should advocate for the integration of telemedicine into diabetes care and ensure that patients have access to the necessary technologies and support.

Collaborative Care Models

Collaborative care models involve the coordination of care among multiple healthcare providers, including nurses, physicians, pharmacists, and other specialists (Machen et al., 2019). These models can improve medication adherence by enhancing communication, reducing fragmentation of care, and providing comprehensive support to patients with diabetes (Machen et al., 2019). A systematic review by Schoenthaler et al. (2012) found that patient and physician factors, such as effective communication and shared decision-making, were associated with improved medication adherence in patients with diabetes.

One example of a collaborative care model is the integration of pharmacists into diabetes care teams (Wermeille et al., 2004). Pharmacists can provide medication education, conduct adherence assessments, and collaborate with nurses and physicians to optimize medication regimens. A pilot study by Wermeille et al. (2004) found that a pharmaceutical care model integrating community pharmacists into the diabetes care team improved medication adherence and glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes.

Addressing Social and Cultural Factors

Social and cultural factors can significantly impact medication adherence among patients with diabetes. Nurses should assess patients' social support systems, cultural beliefs, and socioeconomic status to identify potential barriers to adherence (Hatah et al., 2015; Peeters et al., 2015). A qualitative study by Peeters et al. (2015) found that cultural beliefs and family support influenced medication adherence among patients of Turkish descent with type 2 diabetes. Nurses can collaborate with community health workers and cultural mediators to provide culturally sensitive education and support for medication adherence (South et al., 2010).

Financial barriers, such as the cost of medications and lack of insurance coverage, can also hinder medication adherence in patients with diabetes (Stack et al., 2010). Nurses should assess patients' financial situations and connect them with resources, such as prescription assistance programs and generic drug options, to mitigate the impact of cost on adherence.

Continuous Quality Improvement

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) is a systematic approach to enhancing the quality and safety of healthcare services through ongoing measurement, analysis, and improvement efforts (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Nurses can apply CQI principles to improve medication adherence among patients with diabetes by regularly assessing adherence rates, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing evidence-based interventions (American Diabetes Association, 2021). A study by Al-Haj Mohd et al. (2016) used the Morisky Medication Adherence Scale (MMAS-8) to assess medication adherence among adults with diabetes in the United Arab Emirates and identified factors associated with non-adherence, such as forgetfulness and lack of diabetes knowledge. The findings informed the development of targeted interventions to improve adherence.

Nurses should actively participate in CQI initiatives and use validated tools, such as the MMAS-8 (Morisky et al., 2008) or the Medication Regimen Complexity Index (MRCI) (George et al., 2004), to assess medication adherence and inform quality improvement efforts. Additionally, nurses should engage patients in CQI by seeking their input on barriers to adherence and potential solutions (Waheedi et al., 2017).

Interprofessional Education and Collaboration

Interprofessional education and collaboration are essential for promoting medication adherence among patients with diabetes (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Nurses should participate in interprofessional training programs that foster communication, teamwork, and shared decision-making among healthcare providers (American Diabetes Association, 2021). A systematic review by Reeves et al. (2013) found that interprofessional education interventions significantly improved healthcare processes and patient outcomes, including medication adherence.

Effective interprofessional collaboration requires clear roles and responsibilities, open communication, and mutual respect among healthcare providers (American Diabetes Association, 2021). Nurses can facilitate interprofessional collaboration by serving as patient advocates, communicating patient needs and preferences to other healthcare providers, and coordinating care across settings (American Diabetes Association, 2021). A qualitative study by Borgsteede et al. (2011) highlighted the importance of effective communication between healthcare providers and patients in promoting medication adherence among individuals with type 2 diabetes.

Conclusion

Medication adherence is a critical component of effective diabetes management, and nurses play a vital role in promoting adherence through various strategies. Patient education, motivational interviewing, technology-based interventions, collaborative care models, addressing social and cultural factors, continuous quality improvement, and interprofessional education and collaboration are all evidence-based approaches that nurses can use to improve medication adherence among patients with diabetes. By implementing these strategies and working collaboratively with patients, healthcare providers, and community partners, nurses can significantly improve medication adherence and outcomes for individuals with diabetes.

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