

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE HEALTH-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF  
DIABETIC PATIENTS: A MEDICAL SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY BASED  
ON THE THAMPALAKAMAM DIVISIONAL SECRETARIAT**Kirushalini.P<sup>1</sup>, Thaksha. K<sup>2</sup>, Sivakanthan.S<sup>3</sup>

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**Abstract**

Diabetes is one of the most common non-communicable diseases (NCDs) prevalent in Sri Lanka. Health-seeking behaviour is very important to any person to survive from diseases or health related vulnerabilities. The prevalence of diabetes is poorly reported in Sri Lanka due to the lack of people's participation. The general objective of this study is to identify the factors that influence the health-seeking behaviour of diabetic patients. This study employed a mixed method. Qualitative data were collected through case study methods and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were collected through interviewer-administered questionnaires. Informed written consent was obtained prior to the questionnaire survey. Research ethics were strictly followed throughout the research process. For this community-based study, 75 diabetic patients were selected based on the simple random sampling technique. Survey data were analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 version. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Results reveal that the health-seeking behaviour of the diabetic patients differs according to socio-economic and disease related factors. The results of the study show that 98.7 % of the diabetic patients received medical treatment. The results of the study also indicated that poor self-care, fear, poverty, physical inaction, poor services were the major factors that discourage people from participating medical examinations related to diabetes. The results highlight that 94.7% of the diabetic patients did not have proper knowledge about this disease. The results also reveal that 70.7% of the diabetic patients tolerated the medical effects of the diabetic disease. Majority of them did not do any physical exercise. Lack of physical exercise was found among diabetic patients with poor income. Further, 54.7% of them did not have adequate financial support to receive treatment for diabetes. The results also show that 28% of the diabetic patients did not have family support for care. According to the results, poor dietary management for diabetics was high among diabetic patients with poor family support. The results of the study highlight that the availability of diabetic clinics at divisional hospitals increase the frequency at which patients receive treatment. The study reveals that occupation, income, level of education, religion, self-care, health beliefs, age, family support, tolerance of the disease, the intensity of the disease, knowledge about diabetes and the availability of medical treatment influenced the health-seeking behaviour of the diabetic patients. The study recommends that through proper health education and awareness raising programs, the health-seeking behaviour of diabetic patients can be improved. Diabetic screening programs should be organized routinely for people above the age of 35.

**Keywords:** continuous treatment; diabetic; family support; health seeking behaviour; non communicable diseases

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