

Adult asthma patients' views and experiences of self-management in Malaysia: a qualitative study

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Background: Asthma self-management skills in Malaysia are reportedly poor despite evidence that self-management improved asthma outcomes. We aimed to explore adult asthma patients' views and experiences in self-management.

Methods: Adults with asthma were purposively selected from an urban primary healthcare clinic in Klang District, Malaysia. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted. Audio-recordings were transcribed verbatim and analysed thematically.

Results: A total of 24 participants with age ranged 22-69 years from diverse ethnicity, socioeconomic background and asthma duration were recruited. Participants practised the hot/cold concept of disease in asthma self-management which involved the use of food to 'neutralize' inherent hot/cold body constitution or the 'warm-up' practice to neutralize cold temperature that was believed to be the cause of attacks. Self-management skills were influenced by an interplay between personal experience, beliefs, family influence and advice from health care practitioners; asthma action plans were poorly understood and modified for use. Confidence in self-management improved when participants perceived positive outcomes, regardless of whether the strategy was appropriate or not. Participants expressed a strong desire for better support from health care practitioners on asthma self-management.

Conclusion: Asthma self-management practices were learnt experientially based on personal experiences and beliefs guided by sociocultural influences and advice from health care practitioners, family and friends. There is a need for better patient-health care practitioner partnerships to develop self-management skills.

Declaration of Interest:

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