

Lived Experiences of Patients with Complicated Diabetes Mellitus in Jolo, Sulu

Zianna-Ameera Jul¹ Dr. Agaton Manuel Gerardo Alzate Jr.²

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3479-813X>¹

St. Bernadette Lourdes College.^{1,2}

zjul@sblc.edu.ph¹ nalzate@sblc.edu.ph²

ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus in Kasulutan Village, Jolo, Sulu. Guided by Orem's Self Care Deficit Theory, Roy's Adaptation Model, and Leininger's Transcultural Nursing Theory, the study examined how individuals experienced physical, emotional, and social challenges, the coping mechanisms they adopted, and the support systems that influenced disease management. Purposive sampling was used to recruit eight participants diagnosed with complicated Diabetes Mellitus. Data were gathered through semi structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings from participants' narratives. Findings revealed that participants experienced persistent physical limitations, emotional distress, financial difficulties, and disruptions in family and social roles caused by disease complications. Despite these challenges, participants demonstrated resilience through faith, family support, lifestyle adjustments, treatment adherence, and positive coping strategies. Healthcare providers and community support also played important roles in encouraging self-management and improving participants' quality of life. The findings further emphasized that living with complicated Diabetes Mellitus extends beyond managing physical symptoms because it also involves emotional adaptation, social adjustments, and continuous decision-making in everyday life. The study concluded that patient-centered and culturally responsive care is essential in addressing the complex needs of individuals with complicated Diabetes Mellitus. Strengthening health education, psychosocial interventions, family involvement, and accessible healthcare services may improve self-management and well-being. The findings provide nurses, healthcare institutions, policymakers, and future researchers in developing holistic interventions that enhance the quality of care for patients living with complicated Diabetes Mellitus.

Keywords: Complicated Diabetes Mellitus, Lived Experiences, Phenomenological Study, Coping Mechanisms, Self-Management, Patient-Centered Care, Diabetes Complications, Qualitative Research.

INTRODUCTION

Living with Diabetes Mellitus may be a difficult path, especially when problems start to influence an individual's everyday functions, feelings, relationships and quality of life. Besides physical symptoms patients usually have to cope with anxiety, disruption to their daily lives, financial problems and trouble keeping up with their health. These experiences can significantly impact the way they handle and cope with their condition.

Patients with complex Diabetes Mellitus in places with inadequate healthcare resources like Kasulutan Village, Jolo, Sulu may have significant obstacles in getting care, health information, and proper self-management. By understanding their personal experiences, health care workers can identify their medical needs as well as emotional, social, and cultural concerns. This study aimed to analyze the lived experiences of patients with complex Diabetes Mellitus in Kasulutan Village, Jolo, Sulu. The purpose was to find out about their problems, how they cope with their disease and what support systems allow them to keep going with their illness. Findings of this study may contribute to developing compassionate, patient-centered and culturally appropriate nursing care for persons living with complex Diabetes Mellitus.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus in terms of physical, emotional, and social aspects?
2. How do patients cope with the challenges brought by complicated Diabetes Mellitus?
3. What support systems are available to patients in managing their condition?

Scope and Delimitations

This study explored the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus in Kasulutan Village, Jolo, Sulu. It included only selected participants and excluded clinical aspects and other chronic illnesses. The findings are limited to the participants involved in the study.

Review of Related Literature

The reviewed literature showed that patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus experience physical, emotional, psychological, and social challenges that greatly affect their quality of life (Kolarić et al., 2022; Owusu et al., 2024; Reeves et al., 2025). The studies also emphasized the importance of self-management, treatment adherence, patient education, family support, healthcare access, and patient-centered care in improving coping and disease management (Alrasheeday et al., 2024; Cando et al., 2024; Ngo et al., 2026). These findings provide the foundation for understanding the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus and support the need for the present study.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Orem's Self-Care Deficit Theory, Roy's Adaptation Model, and Leininger's Transcultural Nursing Theory to explain patients' self-care, adaptation, and cultural influences in living with complicated Diabetes Mellitus.

METHODOLOGY

The study described the qualitative phenomenological design, participant selection, data collection, thematic analysis, and ethical procedures used to explore the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus.

Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore and understand the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus.

Research Steps

The study followed systematic procedures, including participant selection, data collection through interviews, thematic analysis, and interpretation of findings.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight purposively selected patients diagnosed with complicated Diabetes Mellitus in Kasulutan Village, Jolo, Sulu.

Data Analysis Methods

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns from the participants lived experiences.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

As a qualitative phenomenological study, no hypotheses were tested. Trustworthiness was established through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

The study was limited to eight participants from Kasulutan Village, Jolo, Sulu. Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation, were strictly observed throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus experienced physical, emotional, and social challenges following their diagnosis. Despite these difficulties, they gradually accepted their condition, adopted healthy coping strategies, and relied on family and healthcare providers for continuous support in managing their illness. The findings indicate that living with complicated Diabetes Mellitus is a continuous process of adaptation. Acceptance, self-management, and strong support systems enabled participants to cope with the physical and emotional demands of the disease while improving their quality of life.

SUMMARY

The study explored the lived experiences of patients with complicated Diabetes Mellitus and found that participants encountered significant challenges but developed resilience through treatment adherence, healthy lifestyle practices, and support from family and healthcare professionals.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that effective management of complicated Diabetes Mellitus requires acceptance, self-care, lifestyle modification, and continuous support from family and healthcare providers to improve patients' well-being and quality of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. **For Nursing Practice.** Strengthen patient-centered education and individualized diabetes care.
2. **For Healthcare Institutions.** Enhance diabetes management through continuous education and psychosocial support.
3. **For Patients and Families.** Promote treatment adherence, healthy lifestyles, and active family involvement.
4. **For Policymakers.** Expand community-based diabetes services and improve healthcare access.
5. **For Future Researchers.** Conduct similar studies with broader populations and different settings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researcher sincerely expresses heartfelt gratitude to **Allah** for His guidance, wisdom, and countless blessings throughout this study. The researcher also extends sincere appreciation to the **research adviser, panel members, family, and friends** for their invaluable guidance, encouragement, and unwavering support, which greatly contributed to the successful completion of this research.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools were used only to assist with grammar, language refinement, organization, and formatting of this manuscript. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret the research data. The researcher assumes full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and academic integrity of this study.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, F., & Joshi, S. H. (2023). *Self-care practices and their role in the control of diabetes: A narrative review*. Cureus, 15(7), e41409.
<https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.41409>
- Aliche, C. J., & Idemudia, E. S. (2024). *Diabetes distress and health-related quality of life among patients with type 2 diabetes—Mediating role of experiential avoidance and moderating role of post-traumatic growth*. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 21(10), 1275. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph21101275>
- Alrasheeday, A., et al. (2024). *Perceived barriers to healthy lifestyle adherence and associated factors among patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus: Implications for improved self-care*. Patient Preference and Adherence, 18, 2425–2439.
<https://doi.org/10.2147/PPA.S432806>