

**PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS HERBAL MEDICINE AND
HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS AMONG TYPE 2 DIABETICS AT
HOSPITAL PAKAR SULTANAH FATIMAH, MUAR, JOHOR.**

ABSTRACT

Traditional and complementary medicine is the main choice for diabetes management among patients with type 2 diabetes. However, there is no evidence on the effectiveness of herbal medicines and health supplements in healing diabetes. This study aimed to identify the perceptions of diabetics about herbal medicines and health supplements using the Health Belief Model constructs (perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, self-efficacy and cues to action). 60 respondents aged 18 years and above with type 2 diabetes participated in this study. Data were collected through direct interview using structured questionnaire.

Majority of the respondents were Malays [83.3% (50)]. 56.7% (170) of respondents who take herbal medicines and health supplements are men. The highest frequency of intake is seven days per week [50% (15)]. The highest expenditure by respondents per month for herbal medicines is RM300 [13.3% (2)], for health supplements is RM200 [16.6% (3)] and for both is RM500 [28.5% (2)]. Bitter gourd [16.7% (5)] is the most taken herbal medicine while vitamin [13.3% (4)] is the most taken health supplement.

Peers [70% (42)] are the main source of information on herbal medicines and health supplements intake. 60% (18) of those who take herbal medicines and health supplements and 40% (12) of those who do not have knowledge on the practice. 53.3% of patients with type 2 diabetes support the practice. The relationship between knowledge and perception is fair, $r = 0.589$, p value = 0.001. Patients with type 2 diabetes appear to have diversified perception towards this practice. Age and peer's influence are potential factors for respondents to support this practice though they are knowledgeable on the consequences of the practice. It is recommended that the diabetes patient education module is added value by emphasising the awareness and knowledge of complying to the proper diabetes management regime.