

Conventional medication adherence and self-treatment practices among South Asian immigrants: a qualitative study

ABSTRACT

Introduction. Globally, cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a common cause of death. The highest CVD rate is among South Asian populations and South Asian immigrants have a higher risk of developing CVD than other ethnic groups. While treatment of established CVD risk factors is recommended, medication adherence may be poor.

Aim. This qualitative study aimed to explore medication adherence practices of New Zealand South Asians who are prescribed medications for type 2 diabetes, and/or hypertension, and/or dyslipidaemia, established risk factors for CVD.

Method. Twenty-one semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with South Asians with type 2 diabetes, and/or hypertension, and/or dyslipidaemia. Data were transcribed, then analysed thematically using NVivo12. Codes and inductively derived themes were discussed.

Results. Five themes with 12 subthemes were identified. The five themes included daily routine and medication adherence practices, perceived necessity of medications and concerns about side effects, concern and hesitancy to start conventional medications, integration of herbal and alternative therapies, and the role of healthcare providers and communication.

Discussion. These findings highlight the importance of personalised approaches to medication management that consider patients' beliefs, daily routines, and cultural contexts to reduce CVD risk and improve health outcomes among South Asians.