



Social support as described by foreign-born persons diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus and living in Sweden.

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Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore and describe the meaning of support and its impact on the life situation of foreign-born persons diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus and living in Sweden in relation to gender, age, and the duration of the disease. Mixed methods were used on a purposive sample of 34 foreign-born adults who had been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Qualitative data were collected by semi-structured interviews and quantitative data were collected by the Norbeck Social Support Questionnaire (NSSQ). The meaning of "support" was described by the participants as medical support, information support, and aiding support to learn to manage diabetes. Support influenced the participants' entire life and their need for it was related to the severity of the diabetes and differences regarding age and gender. The participants scored low on the NSSQ regarding total emotional support, total aid, and total function and 42% had lost an important relationship during the last year. Their marital status had no impact on emotional support but aid was significant. Medical support, with regular follow-up and information, is important in obtaining affirmation and aids in learning to manage diabetes mellitus.

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