

THE IMPACT OF TYPE 2 DIABETES ON WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING DURING THEIR REPRODUCTIVE YEARS: A MIXED-METHODS SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Background: The onset of type 2 diabetes (T2DM) at younger age (<40 years) has become increasingly prevalent, particularly among women. Consequently, there are many more women of reproductive age living with diabetes, with two out of five women living with diabetes during their reproductive years, accounting for over 60 million women worldwide. Despite the increasing prevalence of T2DM among women, the health needs of these women are under-researched.

Aim: The aims of this study are to identify the health issues encountered by women aged 16-45 years living with T2DM and to determine the modifiable risk factors associated with living with diabetes, and to specify ideas for interventions to meet age and gender-specific diabetes-related healthcare needs.

Method: A systematic review was undertaken searching MEDLINE, PsycINFO, EMBASE, CINAHL, Web of Science, and Maternity and Infant Care. Databases were searched without time and study design limits. The Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool was used to assess the methodological quality of included studies. Data were narratively synthesised due to mixed methods evidence included.

Result: A total of 32 papers were included in the review from which six domains related to the impact on health and wellbeing of living with T2DM in women of reproductive age were identified from the synthesis: (1) diabetes related modifiable risk factors: blood glucose, cardiovascular risk, neuropathy/nephropathy/retinopathy, diabetes self-management barriers (2) reproductive health: diabetes care before pregnancy, pre-pregnancy care barriers and expectations of women, contraceptive use (3) psychosocial wellbeing: depression symptoms and diabetes distress, perception of T2DM, emotional concerns about pregnancy (4) sexual function; (5) menopause; (6) sociocultural factors: social support, cultural norms.

Conclusion: This study identified some health issues affecting women's wellbeing with T2DM, which due to the rising prevalence in this age group, represent an important focus for health care delivery and health services research. Future research needs to address identified health domains to improve women's health and well-being living with T2DM.