**The role of community organisations, religion, spirituality and cultural beliefs in diabetes social support and self-management in sub-Saharan Africa: An integrative literature review**

**Background & Aim**

Diabetes is a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa, with three in five individuals undiagnosed and many dying from complications before age 60. Cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs complicate self-management, often delaying medical intervention and increasing reliance on traditional healers. Understanding the role of community organisations and cultural beliefs on diabetes management is crucial for improving diabetes care and health outcomes. Addressing research gaps can lead to more personalised healthcare approaches.

**Methods**

We undertook an integrative systematic review utilising MEDLINE, APA PsycINFO, CINAHL, and grey literature databases. The focus both type 1 and 2 diabetes papers published in sub-Saharan Africa between 2003 -2023. The selected articles were appraised for quality, and the extracted data were analysed thematically.

**Results**

The search yielded 1586 articles, and after eliminating duplicates, 1434 titles and abstracts were screened, followed by a full-text review of 103 articles. Ultimately, 47 articles met the inclusion criteria for the review, utilising various study designs, including qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, and nonrandomised clinical trials. These findings indicate that **s*pirituality and religiosity*** can positively affect ***diabetes self-management*** by providing motivation, coping skills, social support, and guidance for healthy behaviours. A strong social support system enhances diabetes self-management and glycaemic control for individuals with diabetes. However, some aspects of religion and culture, such as beliefs about medications, may also pose challenges or barriers to diabetes self-management. Adherence to medication, food choices, physical activity, and the use of complementary or alternative medicine can be influenced by sociocultural factors. Additionally, cultural beliefs and social norms influence understanding of diabetes aetiology, management, and symptom reactions.

**Discussion/Conclusion**

The findings highlight that it is crucial to understand the cultural, religious, or spiritual influences that can either assist or impede self-management habits in individuals with diabetes and could inform interventions that support personalised and effective care.