ETHNIC DISPARITIES IN HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG OLDER RURAL ADULTS WITH DIABETES

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INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus is a chronic disease with serious economic, social, and personal implications. Diabetes disproportionately affects older adults and ethnic minorities, including African Americans and Native Americans. Previous research suggests two major influences on HRQOL: burden of disease and social resources that can be used to manage the disease.

No studies have specifically assessed the HRQOL of rural elderly persons with diabetes. Overall, rural populations face obstacles in diabetes self-management that can either directly or indirectly affect HRQOL that are not present for their urban counterparts. Elderly living in rural communities may have particular difficulty in modifying their lifestyle to self-manage diabetes because of more limited access to medical specialists, difficulties in finding places to exercise or special foods, and limited diabetes education resources.

In this article, we examine two research questions: What are the contributions of burden of disease, social resources, and ethnicity to HRQOL in older rural adults with diabetes? Do the contributions of burden of disease and social resources differ for mental HRQOL and physical HRQOL?

METHODS

The ELDER (Evaluating Long-term Diabetes self-management among Elder Rural Adults) Study was a population-based cross-sectional survey that comprehensively assessed self-management...