

## THE USE OF HERBAL DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS IN DIABETIC PATIENTS: ROLE OF HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

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Nowadays, the use of herbal dietary supplements in diabetic patients is becoming very popular, following the opinion that the use of dietary supplements combined with conventional anti-diabetic drugs is absolutely safe and justified. The aim of this study was to investigate the potential role of healthcare professionals regarding the use of herbal dietary supplements with hypoglycemic effect in the population of patients with diabetes mellitus type 2.

The research in the form of an analytical cross-sectional study was conducted in 6 pharmacies in the territory of Nis during October 2013. The study enrollment criterion was to include the patients diagnosed with type 2 diabetes who used pharmacotherapy in addition to herbal supplements.

The surveyed women showed a statistically significant difference in the frequency of using herbal supplements compared to the group of men ( $P < 0.001$ ). There was a statistically significant difference between the age groups of respondents in relation to the influence of health service professionals and media on making decisions about the use of herbal dietary supplements.

A multidisciplinary approach of healthcare professionals to pharmacotherapy of chronic disease is recommended. It is essential that doctors and pharmacists recognize the safety and efficacy issues prior to recommending herbal dietary supplements for diabetes care, because of the limited data available regarding the use of dietary supplements in diabetes.

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