

Experiences of Patients with Diabetic Ulcers Undergoing Wound Care with Modern Dressings at Rumah Rara Wonogiri Wound Care Center

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ABSTRACT

Background & Objective: This study aimed to explore the experiences of patients with diabetic ulcers undergoing wound care using modern dressing. **Method:** This study used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique and consisted of five patients with diabetic ulcers who underwent wound care using modern dressing at the Wound Care Rumah Rara, Wonogiri Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using the Colaizzi method. **Result:** The study identified four main themes: (1) self-care efforts to maintain the condition of diabetic wounds, (2) changes in activities and daily life due to diabetic ulcers, (3) experiences of undergoing wound care using modern dressing, and (4) the meaning of the experience of having diabetic ulcers in the participants' lives. Participants demonstrated various self-care efforts, experienced changes in their daily activities, gained experiences throughout the wound care process, and developed greater awareness of maintaining their health after experiencing diabetic ulcers. **Conclusion:** Patients' experiences of undergoing wound care using modern dressing are not only related to the wound healing process but also contribute to developing awareness to become more actively involved in managing diabetes mellitus and adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors. These findings are expected to serve as a foundation for nurses in providing more holistic and patient-centered nursing care.

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Introduction

Diabetes mellitus (DM) is one of the chronic diseases whose prevalence continues to increase in various countries and has become a global health problem. The International Diabetes Federation (IDF) reported that in 2021, 537 million adults were living with diabetes, and this number is estimated to increase to 643 million by 2030 and 783 million by 2045. Indonesia ranks fifth among the countries with the highest number of people living with diabetes worldwide, highlighting the need for optimal control efforts to prevent various complications (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2023; Prawinda et al., 2024).

One of the chronic complications of diabetes mellitus is diabetic ulcer, which occurs due to peripheral neuropathy, impaired peripheral circulation, and infection. This condition can cause tissue damage, increase the risk of amputation, prolong the duration of treatment, and reduce patients' quality of life. Therefore, the management of diabetic ulcers requires appropriate treatment to accelerate wound healing and prevent further complications (Alzamani et al., 2021; Sari & Eriksson, 2023).

One of the wound care methods widely used today is modern dressing, which applies the principle of moist wound healing. This method maintains wound moisture, thereby supporting the formation of granulation tissue, accelerating tissue regeneration, reducing pain, controlling exudate, and minimizing trauma during dressing changes. Various studies have shown that modern dressing is more effective than conventional wound care in accelerating the healing process of diabetic ulcers (Diah Larasati et al., 2025; Nuutila & Eriksson, 2021; Riyanti et al., 2024).

In addition to the clinical success of wound healing, patients' experiences during treatment are also an important aspect that needs to be understood. These experiences can provide an overview of patients' perceptions, comfort, expectations, and challenges encountered during wound care using modern dressing.

Although various studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of modern dressing in accelerating wound healing, most studies still focus on clinical outcomes, such as wound healing, reduced risk of infection, and duration of treatment. Research exploring patients' experiences during wound care using modern dressing, particularly through a qualitative approach, remains limited. In fact, patients' experiences are important for understanding their perceptions, comfort, barriers, and the meaning they derive throughout the treatment process, which can serve as a basis for providing more patient-centered nursing care (Nurfitriani et al., 2024; Shafa et al., 2025).

Based on the above description, this study aims to explore the experiences of patients with diabetic ulcers undergoing wound care using modern dressing at Wound Care Rumah Rara, Wonogiri. The results of this study are expected to provide an overview of patients' experiences and serve as input for nurses in delivering nursing care that is more holistic, humanistic, and oriented toward patients' needs (PERKENI, 2024).

Objective

This study aims to explore the experiences of patients with diabetic ulcers undergoing wound care using modern dressing at Wound Care Rumah Rara, Wonogiri. This study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of patients' experiences during wound care, thereby serving as a foundation for developing nursing care that is more holistic, patient-centered, and aligned with patients' needs.

Method

This study used a qualitative research design with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of patients with diabetic ulcers undergoing wound care using modern dressing (Hasan et al., 2025; Nasir et al., 2023). The study was conducted at Wound Care Rumah Rara, Wonogiri Regency, Central Java, from April to May 2026. A total of 5 participants were selected using the purposive sampling technique based on the inclusion criteria, namely patients diagnosed with diabetic ulcers, undergoing wound care using modern dressing for a minimum of one month, having wound grades I–IV, and willing to participate in in-depth interviews. Participants who experienced impaired consciousness, communication disorders, or were unwilling to participate in the study were excluded.

The primary research instrument was the researcher, supported by a semi-structured interview guide, observation sheets, field notes, and documentation. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and direct observation of participants during wound care. Data analysis used the Colaizzi method, which included identifying significant statements, formulating meanings, grouping them into themes, developing a comprehensive description, and conducting member checking to ensure the consistency of the interpretation with the participants' experiences (Husnullail et al., 2024). Data validity was maintained through the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, using triangulation and member checking techniques. This study obtained ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee (KEPK), and all participants provided written informed consent before the study was conducted.

Results

Participant Characteristics

TABLE 1. Participant Characteristics

Code	Age	Gender	Duration of Diabetes	Duration of Wound	Occupation
P1	50 years	Female	Since 2021	3 months	Assists at a restaurant
P2	68 years	Female	Since 2015	6 years	Trader
P3	65 years	Female	Since 2020	5 months	Herbal medicine seller
P4	60 years	Male	Since 2021	1 year	Trader
P5	49 years	Female	Since 2024	2 months	Catering worker

This study involved five participants, consisting of four females and one male. The participants' ages ranged from 49 to 68 years. The duration of diabetes mellitus varied from 2015 to 2024, while the duration of experiencing diabetic ulcers ranged from two months to six years. All participants underwent wound care using modern dressing at Wound Care Rumah Rara, Wonogiri Regency. The participants' occupations also varied, including housewives, traders, herbal medicine sellers, catering workers, and individuals assisting in restaurant businesses, providing an overview of the participants' daily activities before and during their experience with diabetic ulcers.

Thematic analysis generated four main themes as follows.

Based on the results of data analysis using the Colaizzi method on in-depth interviews with five participants, four main themes were identified that describe the experiences of patients with diabetic ulcers undergoing wound care using modern dressing. These themes include:

- 1) Self-Care Efforts to Maintain the Condition of Diabetic Wounds
- 2) Changes in Activities and Daily Life Due to Diabetic Ulcers
- 3) Experiences of Undergoing Wound Care Using Modern Dressing
- 4) The Meaning of the Experience of Having Diabetic Ulcers in the Participants' Lives

Theme 1. Self-Care Efforts to Maintain the Condition of Diabetic Wounds

Participants expressed that they made various efforts to maintain the condition of their wounds to prevent them from worsening. These efforts included maintaining dietary patterns, reducing the consumption of sweet foods and beverages, regularly taking medication, maintaining wound hygiene, and following the recommendations of healthcare professionals during wound care.

One participant stated:

"Yes, of course, I maintain my diet, ma'am, take my medication regularly, reduce sweet drinks as well, ma'am, and drink plenty of water so that my blood sugar doesn't get too high." (P3)

Another participant also stated:

"Yes, I make sure the wound is cleaned regularly, take my medication regularly, and maintain my diet, ma'am." (P5)

Theme 2. Changes in Activities and Daily Life Due to Diabetic Ulcers

Most participants experienced changes in their activities and daily lives after developing diabetic ulcers. Participants reported that their activities became more limited, they experienced difficulty walking, were unable to work as they had previously, and spent more time engaging in activities at home.

One participant stated:

"Yes, I have to rest completely, ma'am, and my activities have also changed. Now, even walking is difficult. I have to use crutches to walk. I used to be able to go anywhere, but now I just stay at home." (P1)

Another participant expressed:

"Yes, there have been changes, ma'am. I used to work at the market selling seafood, but since my leg became like this, I can't go anywhere anymore. I can only sell groceries like this from home, ma'am." (P2)

Theme 3. Experiences of Undergoing Wound Care Using Modern Dressing

Participants described various experiences during wound care using modern dressing. At the beginning of treatment, some participants admitted that they did not yet understand the wound care process and had to adapt to the changes in their condition. Throughout the treatment process, participants received assistance from healthcare professionals and family members, enabling them to undergo regular wound care more effectively.

One participant stated:

"I didn't know anything before, ma'am... then I was taken to the clinic." (P3)

Another participant also stated:

"As for the person who takes care of the wound every day, it's Mr. Anggoro, ma'am..." (P2)

Theme 4. The Meaning of the Experience of Having Diabetic Ulcers in the Participants' Lives

Participants interpreted their experience of having diabetic ulcers as a valuable learning experience. This experience increased their awareness of the importance of maintaining their health, adopting a healthy lifestyle, controlling blood glucose levels, and undergoing regular health check-ups.

One participant stated:

"The meaning is that I need to take better care of my diet, ma'am, so that my blood sugar doesn't get too high, and take my medication regularly so that I can recover quickly, ma'am." (P3)

Another participant expressed:

"For me, the meaning is that I need to be more careful about my health, ma'am, and have regular health check-ups, especially for someone like me who has diabetes. It makes me more cautious." (P5)

Discussion

Theme 1. Self-Care Efforts to Maintain the Condition of Diabetic Wounds

Participants in this study demonstrated various forms of self-care to maintain the condition of diabetic wounds, such as maintaining dietary patterns, reducing the consumption of sweet foods and beverages, taking medication regularly, maintaining wound hygiene, and following the recommendations of healthcare professionals. These findings indicate that participants were aware of the importance of actively managing diabetes mellitus while supporting the wound healing process.

The results of this study are consistent with the concept of self-care in diabetes mellitus, which emphasizes the importance of dietary management, adherence to therapy, blood glucose monitoring, physical activity, and independent foot and wound care. Proper implementation of self-care can help control blood glucose levels, accelerate wound healing, and reduce the risk of complications. In addition, education from healthcare professionals and active patient involvement are important factors in improving the success of diabetes mellitus management (Sitorus & Pangkey, 2023; Untari et al., 2024; Wilson Sihalocho et al., 2024).

The findings of this study are also supported by research conducted by Muhammad et al. (2022), which showed that proper dietary patterns are associated with the healing process of diabetic ulcers. Blood glucose control through appropriate dietary patterns and adherence to therapy contributes to wound healing and complication prevention. Therefore, nurses play an important role in providing education and support to patients so that they can consistently implement self-care, allowing the wound healing process to proceed optimally.

Theme 2. Changes in Activities and Daily Life Due to Diabetic Ulcers

Participants in this study experienced various changes in their activities and daily lives after developing diabetic ulcers. Most participants reported experiencing limited mobility, difficulty walking, requiring assistive devices, and being unable to work as they had previously. These conditions caused participants to become more dependent on family assistance in meeting their daily needs.

These findings are consistent with the theory that diabetic ulcers are chronic complications of diabetes mellitus that can cause impaired lower-extremity function due to peripheral neuropathy, peripheral artery disease, and infection. These

conditions affect mobility, limit the ability to perform daily activities, and reduce quality of life. During the healing process, patients also need to reduce pressure on the wound area to prevent deterioration and support optimal healing (Azzahra et al., 2025; Oe et al., 2024; Oruh, 2025).

The results of this study are also consistent with research conducted by Sani et al. (2023), which showed that patients with diabetes mellitus and complications experienced a decline in their ability to perform physical activities, leading to increased dependence on others and reduced quality of life. Therefore, nurses play an important role in providing education and support to patients and their families to maintain patient independence, assist with adaptation to changes in activities, and prevent further complications.

Theme 3. Experiences of Undergoing Wound Care Using Modern Dressing

Participants in this study described various experiences during wound care using modern dressing. At the beginning of treatment, some participants admitted that they did not yet understand the wound care process and experienced difficulties adapting to the changes in their condition. As treatment progressed, participants received support from healthcare professionals and family members, enabling them to better understand the treatment process and adhere to therapy regularly. These experiences demonstrate that support throughout the treatment process plays an important role in helping patients adapt to their disease conditions.

These findings are consistent with the concept of modern dressing, which applies the principle of moist wound healing, namely maintaining optimal wound moisture throughout the healing process. A moist wound environment can accelerate granulation tissue formation, support tissue regeneration, reduce pain, control exudate, and minimize trauma during dressing changes, thereby providing greater comfort for patients compared to conventional wound care methods (Normalia et al., 2025; Nuutila & Eriksson, 2021; Riyanti et al., 2024).

The results of this study are also supported by research conducted by Putri et al. (2023), which showed that the use of modern dressing can create an optimal wound environment, thereby accelerating the healing process and improving patient comfort. Therefore, nurses play an important role in providing education regarding the purpose, benefits, and procedures of wound care using modern dressing, enabling patients to better understand the treatment process and remain motivated to undergo therapy optimally.

Theme 4. The Meaning of the Experience of Having Diabetic Ulcers in the Participants' Lives

Participants in this study interpreted their experience of having diabetic ulcers as a valuable learning experience in their lives. This experience increased participants' awareness of the importance of maintaining their health, managing their diet, taking medication regularly, undergoing periodic health check-ups, and being more cautious in managing diabetes mellitus to prevent recurrent complications.

These findings are consistent with the principles of diabetes mellitus management, which emphasize the importance of active patient involvement in implementing sustainable lifestyle changes. Dietary management, adherence to therapy, blood glucose monitoring, physical activity, and regular health check-ups are

important components in preventing complications and maintaining the quality of life of patients with diabetes mellitus (PERKENI, 2024).

The results of this study are also supported by research conducted by Nony & Bratajaya (2023), which showed that the experience of undergoing diabetic ulcer treatment can increase patients' awareness of the importance of maintaining their health and managing their disease sustainably. Therefore, nurses need to provide continuous education and support so that established behavioral changes can be maintained, thereby minimizing the risk of future complications.

Conclusion

This study shows that patients with diabetic ulcers undergoing wound care using modern dressing have diverse experiences, including self-care efforts, changes in daily activities, experiences during wound care, and changes in their perceptions of health. These experiences are not only related to the wound healing process but also encourage increased patient awareness in managing diabetes mellitus and adopting healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Nurses are expected to provide continuous education and support to patients with diabetic ulcers regarding diabetes mellitus management, wound care, and the implementation of self-care. Future research is recommended to involve more diverse participants and be conducted in various healthcare facilities to enrich findings regarding patients' experiences.

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