

Cultural Perspectives on Diabetes in an Appalachian Population

Shannon L. Smith, MA; Irene A. Tessaro, MA, MSN, DrPH

Objective: To gain an understanding of cultural and socioeconomic forces that shape beliefs about diabetes and its self-management. **Methods:** Thirteen focus groups were conducted in community settings in West Virginia using a semistructured interview guide. **Results:** Diabetes is perceived as a relatively new disease. Self-management behaviors reflect a mixture of cultural be-

liefs and limited resources. Moral overtones stigmatize diabetes. **Conclusions:** Understanding patients' illness experiences from within their cultural framework is important for successful community programming regarding chronic disease management.

Key words: diabetes, self-management behaviors, rural, culture, Appalachia

Am J Health Behav. 2005;29(4):291-301
