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Title: Understanding the Health Seeking Behaviours of Liberians Living with Diabetes: A Critical Hermeneutic Study

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Background: Diabetes is a serious public health threat in Liberia, where an estimated 5.6% of the population of 4.5 million are living with the disease. The challenges with diabetes in Liberia are enormous. Diabetes places immense socioeconomic pressure on individuals and their families and burdens an already overstretched healthcare system, still recovering from the destructive effects of the 14-year civil war. While efforts towards rebuilding the healthcare system in Liberia are ongoing, people with diabetes experience significant challenges regarding accessing social, economic, and healthcare resources to manage their illness. These challenges affect their responses to health issues and influence their decision-making surrounding seeking healthcare.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to critically explore how social, economic, political, cultural, and historical factors/structures affect health seeking behaviours for adults living with diabetes in Liberia.

Methodology & Methods: Critical hermeneutics is the methodological approach that is being used to interpret participants' experiences of health care-seeking. Through purposeful sampling, 10 adults with diabetes have been recruited from Redemption Hospital in Monrovia, Liberia. Data has been collected using photovoice method, wherein participants have photographed their experiences of seeking care, documenting both the facilitators and barriers. At this stage in the research, data collection is complete, and the study is now in the data analysis phase.

Significance: The findings from this study will be used to provide guidance to local and global health policy makers on how to address the health needs of individuals with diabetes in the Liberian context. Health policies that reflect the influence of a myriad of factors (i.e., social, economic, political, cultural, and historical) on health outcomes for people with diabetes may inform programs that improve diabetes care, prevent, or delay complications, and enhance quality of life of individuals living with diabetes in Liberia.

Keywords: Diabetes, Health Seeking Behaviours, Critical Hermeneutics, Photovoice, Liberia