

**Supplementary table 2: Selected Quotes: Patient perspectives**

<b>Recognising and living with diabetes</b>	<i>"I went abroad on work, so in that company they conducted free checkup and tested for diabetes. That time only I learnt that I have diabetes". (59 years, M)</i>
	<i>"I was fat previously but gradually my weight started reducing. I felt itching sensation while passing urine. During that time, I had been advised to undergo surgery to remove a tumour in my uterus. So, I assumed that my weight loss and itching was due to the tumour. This was 7 years back, when I consulted the doctor, he said that I had diabetes". (50 years, F)</i>
	<i>"I thought I will not get diabetes, as I am the third son in my family. I was assuming that only the first son will get so I ignored it but finally I also got diabetes". (58 years, M)</i>
	<i>"I was afraid at that time. It is not only difficult for me but also difficult for others in the family. So initially I was scared". (65 years, F)</i>
	<i>"I felt too upset and cried when I came to learn that I have got diabetes.... I was upset that I had got it rather early in my life but now I am in a situation where I can even counsel people". (48 years, F)</i>
	<i>"I took it lightly, I didn't consider it as a disease only. Because my father, grandfather, my mother and father in law, my wife everyone is diabetic, that's why I didn't worry too much". (58 years, M)</i>
	<i>"The reason for keeping my sugar under control these 20 years is due to self-control. I do not touch sweets, have to cheat my tongue. I have completely avoided taking tea, coffee while attending functions also. I have changed my life style. Along with that I do exercise, yoga and walking thereby keeping sugar under control". (59 years, M)</i>
<b>Care-seeking practices</b>	<i>"I used to undergo blood test, only when I intend to go for consultation. I am getting depressed just thinking about these frequent blood tests. But I have been diagnosed with diabetes and have to survive with the disease". (48 years, F)</i>
	<i>"I consult with one doctor only. I know him from my childhood days. I have not gone separately to a sugar specialist. I am satisfied with this doctor and there is no problem, so am continuing with him. Why do I need to see 10 doctors, where each one will take a different decision". (67 years, M)</i>
	<i>"I have consulted with 15 doctors but still did not recover. I even tried "naatu vaithiyam" (traditional medicines) for 1.5 months, that to did not help. Every night I will be crying because of this pain and pricking sensation. On seeing this, my son has taken me to so many hospitals, nearly 15 doctors he has taken me to see in just one month. Wherever he advised I have gone there". (55 years, F)</i>
	<i>"Doctors must not threaten the patient. They often tell the patient that they will lose their eyes or kidney or have heart problem, or they will not be able to walk. Whatever information is necessary must be discussed with patient but they must not threaten the patient. If they threaten then the patient is no more going to visit that doctor. My doctors are threatening me now that's why I don't want to consult them. They should say it gently so the patient must not get scared. If the doctor's smiles and talk in a friendly manner, we won't be scared". (65 years, F)</i>
	<i>"Doctor always advises me to reduce the sugar level and the level must not be high at all. He used to ask whether am I walking or not? If I say no then he will insist that I walk. Regarding food intake also they have told me. Dietician has given suggestions to change my food intake pattern". (48 years, F)</i>

<b>Awareness about DR</b>	<i>“Diabetic Retinopathy means eye will get affected and vision will be lost. Nerve surrounding the eye will get weaker; this is called as “Fundus Retinopathy”. Because of diabetes cataract problem will come. Known diabetic patients must take care of eye from getting more affected due to cataract”. (76 years, M)</i>
	<i>“I heard that directly the vision will get affected, but I don’t know which part of eye gets affected. Sometimes it can lead to glaucoma, but am not sure”. (59 years, M)</i>
	<i>“If we have sugar, glaucoma will come, it will affect eyes, blurred or black spots can happen. Mainly I have heard about this I do not know of any other problem”. (66 years, M)</i>
	<i>“No, I have not heard from anywhere the term ‘diabetic retinopathy’. I have not attended camps for eye care. They (referring to the medical team) have come for camp, but I have not attended”. (67 years, M)</i>
	<i>“Diabetic retinopathy means nerve will get affected....If your vision is affected from birth then it is ok, but if you lose your vision in the middle of your life then getting back what is lost is very difficult. So, you have to control sugar and have yearly check-up. This is what is advised to us by the doctors”. (48 years, F)</i>
<b>Barriers to DR Screening</b>	<i>“If I have pain I think to go and meet the doctor, if not why do I need to go. If we are normal why do we need to consult the doctor? They will write and give more medicines which will only create more heat in my body because of that I do not go”. (65 years, F)</i>
	<i>“Eye is fine, so they won’t come back. Only when they attain severe stage they will consult, till then they won’t know. Financial problem may be the reason. If a person is retired there won’t be earning or dependent on a small pension or on the son who may not give money. So 90% is due to financial constraint”. (72 years, M)</i>
	<i>“Generally, doctors don’t have that much time to explain as they are busy. If we ask they tell that they are busy which makes the patient hesitant to ask further questions”. (66 years, M)</i>
	<i>“It takes a whole day to complete and come back home since it is very far... by the time I return home it will be evening. There is no one to take care of my daughter”. (48 years, F)</i>
	<i>“If it is nearby then it will be good. This much distance is far for me. I don’t come alone, my neighbour only took me here. While going back home my younger son will come to pick up. Since I am diabetic, my family members are scared to send me alone to hospital”. (50 years, F)</i>
	<i>“Work is there at home so I won’t be able to go. There is also no one to accompany me, like while going for blood test or for any other tests”. (65 years, F)</i>

Note: DM, diabetes mellitus; M, Male; F, Female