Abstract

Diabetes is a key public health priority and a major health concern for many migrant communities in Australia. According to many health reports published over the past years Sri Lankan migrants have been identified as having a significantly higher prevalence of type two diabetes in Australia compared to general Australian population. Understanding people’s comprehensions of the disease and its management is essential to successfully address any related issues in order to avoid premature deaths and high public health costs. This ethnography revolves around a group of first generation Sri Lankan migrants in Australia. It relates their story of encountering and dealing with the complexities of being migrants from a developing nation while having to manage a chronic illness. I demonstrate that aspects that affect their perceptions and actions regarding the management of diabetes derive from personal history, their attachment to the collective cultural history of the community, their aspirations of upward social mobility coupled with attaining a higher standard of living as well as from the pressure caused by the differences in their conceptualization of ‘control’ from that of the doctors.

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Supervisors:

A/Professor Martha Macintyre
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At 2.30pm
Room 515
207 Bouverie Street, Carlton

Prabhatti completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka in the field of Sociology where she also worked as a junior lecturer before migrating to Australia in 2006. After completing her Master’s in Social Health (Medical Anthropology) in 2007 at Centre for Health and Society, she worked at the Australian Community Centre for Diabetes at Victoria University for several years before embarking on her PhD research in 2010. Her interests in academics encompass anthropology and literature on migration, migrant health and organ transplantation and trafficking studies.