

Chapter-6

Medication Adherence

Topic in this PDF:

Definition, factors influencing non adherence, strategies to overcome non-adherence

Definition:

- Medication adherence, or taking medications correctly, is generally defined as the extent to which patients take medication as prescribed by their doctors.
- This involves factors such as getting prescriptions filled, remembering to take medication on time, and understanding the directions."

Factors influencing non adherence

Various determinants such as

- Nature and duration of therapy,
- Disease characteristics,
- Medication side-effects,
- Cost of treatment,
- Characteristics of health service facilities,
- The relation between the physician and patient,

Patient characteristics such as

- Socioeconomic factors,
- Patient's perspective about the illness and therapy have been reported to influence adherence.

Strategies to overcome non-adherence

- The problem of medication non-adherence is often multifactorial, and there is no universal formula that will resolve adherence issues for every patient in every situation.

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Educational and behavioral interventions

Rather than simply telling patients what their treatment plan is, it is valuable to take the time to explain the decision-making process to patients, so that they feel a sense of ownership of their treatment. This discussion could cover:

- The benefits and adverse effects of available therapies or medical devices
- A review of the alternatives to the treatment or device that is finally chosen
- The rationale for the selected treatment (improves symptoms, encourage weight gain, etc.)
- The need for prolonged treatment
- The expected effects (e.g., speed of onset) and side effects
- Any possible adjustments that might be needed during treatment.

Reviewing progress

- To help maintain patient perseverance, it is critical to schedule follow-up appointments after initial advice and prescription.
- The timing of these follow-ups is important; the standard 12-week follow-up appointment may be too late, as patients starting a new treatment plan benefit from check-ins within the first few weeks.
- They can then report back on their experience, allowing HCPs to intervene as needed, and advise on changes in dosage or treatment routine.
- This dialogue makes patients feel supported, and that their personal needs are being taken into consideration.
- It may be more efficient to check in with patients through teleconsultations, as regular face-to-face appointments can increase costs, as well as the burden on patients.
- Patients may also benefit from exchanging experiences with others in a similar position, through community and patient groups.