D.PHARM • SECOND YEAR

Community Pharmacy & Managem

CHAPTER 6

Medication Adherence



ENGLISH CHAPTER NOTES

DIPLOMA IN PHARMACY

MEDICATION ADHERENCE

Introduction

Medication adherence means how closely a patient follows the medication plan agreed with the healthcare provider.

WHO's wider concept of adherence includes:

Taking medicines • Following a diet • Making agreed lifestyle changes



Scope of Medication Adherence

- Acute, chronic and preventive treatments.
- Hospital, community and home care.
- Especially important in Hypertension, Diabetes, Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Psychiatric disorders.

Why Is It Important?

- Supports the intended therapeutic effect.
- Helps prevent disease progression, complications and relapse.
- Correct use of appropriately prescribed antimicrobials helps reduce the risk of drug resistance.
- Can reduce hospital readmissions and healthcare costs.
- Improves individual and public health outcomes.

Non-adherence

Not following the agreed plan can lead to treatment failure, increased morbidity and mortality.

Complex regimens, side effects, cost and poor understanding are common challenges.

Find the difficulty and offer support; do not blame the patient.

FACTORS INFLUENCING NON-ADHERENCE

Non-adherence is multifactorial: several causes can act together.

1. **Patient-related factors**
   - Poor understanding of instructions or why treatment matters.
   - Forgetfulness; cognitive difficulties may increase it.
   - Depression or anxiety can reduce motivation.
   - Belief that medicine is unnecessary, especially without symptoms.
   - Fear of side effects.

2. **Therapy-related factors**
   - Multiple medicines, frequent doses or special instructions.
   - Long treatment duration.
   - Unpleasant side effects.

3. **Condition-related factors**
   - No obvious symptoms, as in Hypertension or high cholesterol.
   - Severe or painful symptoms may improve or worsen adherence.

4. **Healthcare system and provider-related factors**
   - Unclear instructions or an unapproachable provider.
   - Little follow-up or monitoring.
   - Distance, few appointments and long waiting times.

5. **Socioeconomic factors**
   - High medicine costs and lack of health insurance.
   - Low health literacy.
   - Cultural beliefs and language barriers.

STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME NON-ADHERENCE

Choose support according to the patient's actual difficulty.

A. Patient Education and Counseling

- Explain the disease and treatment in simple language.
- Explain why adherence matters and the risks of missed treatment.
- Use visual aids or demonstrations when useful.
- Give written instructions in the preferred language.

B. Simplify the Medication Regimen

- Ask the prescriber whether a suitable fixed-dose combination can reduce pill burden.
- Less frequent dosing may help when clinically appropriate.
- Fit medicine timing into the daily routine, while following food and dose instructions.
- Do not change a prescription independently.

C. Improve Communication

- Build trust and listen without judgment.
- Encourage questions and discussion of concerns.
- Use shared decision-making: involve the patient in treatment choices.

D. Reminder Systems and Tools

- Medication reminder apps.
- Pill organizers or suitable blister packs.
- Text messages or telephone reminders.
- Smart pill bottles with dose-time alerts.

Select practical tools with the patient; one method will not suit everyone.

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