
Technologies and Strategies to Improve Medication Adherence

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To comply with the medication prescribed is an important and serious challenge for health systems that leads to improve the quality of life and outcome of patients, at the same time that reduces the healthcare cost as prevents the need for further medical interventions down the road for those patients that do not adhere to prescribed treatments. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), approximately 50% of patients fail to adhere to the prescribed regimes for the recommended long-term medication.

Complexity of treatment regimes and lack of communication with doctors, or fear of side effects -in addition to the cost of prescriptions- are some of the reasons why patients fail to adhere to medical treatments or influence the decision to interrupt therapies, especially chronic patients, with a considerable loss in life quality.

Among the factors that ensure patient adherence, talking to the doctor and healthcare professionals, and having a good understanding of the illness and the medication rank high on the list. Gender and age seem to play an important role, as it is the family network, while the increase number of conditions seems to negatively correlate with medication adherence.

Motivation and the development of behavioural skills, as well as regular review of patients, follow-up and good communication with healthcare teams are crucial in helping patients to stick to the treatment.

Health technology -electronic reminders to alert patient of taking the medication, to monitor parameters in various chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart failure and hypertension, or alert patients of incoming appointments- and a person-centered approach for medication that incorporates patient beliefs, preferences, goals, and barriers to medication adherence, and tailoring tools and strategies to the individual patient also improve the adherence to treatments. However, the use of these technologies needs to be rigorously evaluated in order to understand the potential benefits and limitations.