

MEDICATION COMPLIANCE

Risk Factors/Predictors of Non-Compliance with Medications After Discharge from Acute Hospitalization:

1. Weak alliance with inpatient staff
2. History of non-compliance
3. Recent substance use
4. Difficulty recognizing own symptoms
5. Family who refuse to become involved in inpatient treatment

Three Variables Associated with Becoming Medication Non-Compliant:

1. Substance use disorder
2. History of medication non-compliance
3. Family refusal to participate in treatment

Consequences of Medication Non-Compliance:

1. Increased risk of hospitalization
2. Emergency room visits
3. Homelessness
4. Symptom exacerbation

Medication compliance is not related to whether patient acknowledged having a mental illness or diagnosis of schizophrenia. Rather, to patient's ability to recognize clinical symptoms. Patients who have difficulty recognizing their own symptoms may be less aware of their ongoing need for maintenance treatment and therefore less appreciative of the benefits of antipsychotic medications.

How to Assess Insight:

1. Do you believe you have a mental illness?
2. Would you say you have emotional problems?

If patient answers in the positive:

1. What do you understand to be your diagnosis?
2. How difficult was it for you to recognize the symptoms of your illness (difficult, somewhat difficult, not difficult)?

(From "Predicting Medication Noncompliance After Hospital Discharge Among Patients with Schizophrenia," Olfson, et al, Psychiatric Services, February 2000, vol. 51, no. 2)