CHAPTER 7
Drug Adherence and Strategies for Compliance

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OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the importance of good adherence and the consequences when adherence is poor

2. Describe effective strategies to promote adherence and discuss how to help patients cope with non-toxic side effects of ARVs

3. Demonstrate ways to counsel patients about adherence

4. Develop a tool or questionnaire to measure adherence in your local context
DEFINITIONS OF ADHERENCE AND COMPLIANCE

• Adherence is the term used to describe the patient’s behavior of taking drugs correctly – in the right dose, with the right frequency, and at the correct time.

• A critical aspect of adherence is the patient’s involvement in deciding whether or not to take the drugs.

• Compliance means the patient does what he or she has been told to do by the doctor/pharmacist.
MEASURING ADHERENCE

• Directly Observed Therapy (DOT): Theoretically associated with 100% adherence. Labor intensive and impractical outside institutional setting

• Electronic pill bottle monitoring, e.g., Medication Event Monitoring Systems (MEMS): Expensive. A patient can remove doses but then not take them. Cannot be used on blister packs.

• Patient self-report: Convenient and inexpensive.

• Pill count: Labor intensive
MEASURING ADHERENCE

- Plasma drug levels: Objective measure
- Pharmacy Records/ prescription refill monitoring
- Viral load assay: Not a primary measure of adherence. Surrogate marker: can be helpful when used with patient self-reports
ADHERENCE: GENERAL COMMENTS

- One of the key determinants of treatment success
- Poor adherence leads to virologic failure, evolution of drug resistance, and subsequent immunologic and clinical failure
- Important to counsel patients carefully before initiating ART. Involves clinicians, nurses, pharmacist, family etc
- ART should not be started on first clinic visit: treatment adherence counseling is necessary to prepare the patient in order to maximize adherence
- Once treatment has started, continued monitoring and support for adherence is necessary
FACTORS AFFECTING ADHERENCE

• Patient-related factors
  ▪ Patient readiness/commitment
  ▪ Forgetfulness
  ▪ Travel away from home
  ▪ Lifestyle
  ▪ Depression
  ▪ Cultural
  ▪ Socioeconomic
  ▪ Etc
FACTORS AFFECTING ADHERENCE

• **Provider-related factors**
  • Provider readiness - knowledge, skills
  • Counseling
  • Patient education
  • Medication alerts, e.g., charts, diaries, etc.
  • Adherence team
  • Provider support
  • Etc.
FACTORS AFFECTING ADHERENCE

• **Regimen/Drug-related factors**
  • Pill burden
  • Frequency
  • Side effects
  • Food restrictions
  • Drug interactions
  • Storage
  • Etc
FACTORS AFFECTING ADHERENCE

• Other factors
  • Cost
ADHERENCE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- Educate and motivate: basic drug info, importance of adherence, timing of medications, drug interactions, etc
- Simplify regimen
- Tailor treatment to patient’s lifestyle
- Prepare for and manage side effects
- Employ an adherence team
ADHERENCE INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- Address patient related issues
- Recruit an adherence monitor
- Provide adherence promoting devices
- Use home-based care staff to promote adherence
- Use adaptation of directly observed therapy for time to be determined
Thank You