
Relationship Between Medication Adherence and Beliefs in Patients with Mental Health Disorders

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Introduction: Medication non-adherence is a major factor contributing to poor clinical outcomes in patients with mental health disorders and is a complex behavioural process determined by several interacting factors. Patient adherence to treatment is likely to be influenced by a complex interaction of treatment, patient beliefs and sociodemographic factors.

Objectives: The aim of this study is to identify patient related factors that affect adherence and assess the impact of attitudes and beliefs in medication adherence.

Methods: This cross sectional study is being developed at Mental Health Departments of 3 general hospitals in Lisbon great area. The sample is being collected through individual interviews. The participants will complete the *Beliefs about Medicines Questionnaire* (Horne et al., 1997); *Medication Adherence Questionnaire* (Delgado & Lima, 2001) and additional measures to assess symptom severity, illness perception and sociodemographic characteristics.

Results We enrolled a total of 121 patients (mean age = 39.8; \pm 9.3) with the following diagnoses: schizophrenia (40.5%), schizo-affective (5.8%), bipolar disorder (50.4%) and other psychosis (3.3%). We have found a significant negative correlation with medication beliefs and adherence ($r = -0.226$; $p = 0.013$) and a significant correlation with beliefs and psychopathology ($r = 0.41$; $p = 0.00$), i.e., patients with negative beliefs and higher levels of psychopathology, less adhered to medication.

Conclusion: Shared discussion of beliefs about medication between patient and mental health professional allows wider exploration of personal meanings that can help to improve medication adherence and therapeutic alliance. Further research on patients beliefs should focus on targeting non-adherent patients whose reasons for their non-adherence is driven by their medication beliefs.