

COMPREHENSION AND COMPANIONSHIP IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AS PREDICTORS OF TREATMENT ADHERENCE: A PROSPECTIVE STUDY

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Introduction: Lack of adherence to recommended treatment poses major clinical and economic challenges for psychiatry, and requires further study.

Objectives and aims: We aimed to prospectively investigate the association between the level of understanding of psychiatric emergency department (ED) discharge recommendations and presence of a companion with short term treatment adherence.

Methods: Sixty subjects were evaluated twice: upon ED discharge and a month later. Instruments included a structured questionnaire based on the MacArthur Competence Assessment Tool for Treatment, MMSE, and corroboration of data with the computerized hospital medical file.

Results: There was a significant association between patient understanding and adherence with medication instructions ($p < .01$) and adherence to psychiatric follow-up ($p < .05$). There was also an association between the presence of a companion and adherence to medication instructions ($\chi^2(1)=7.0$, $p < .01$).

Conclusions: Ensuring patients' understanding of treatment recommendations and encouraging the company of patients are achievable, practical strategies that may improve adherence and thereby promote better outcomes.