

PharmaCE™

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the journal of Pharmacy Technology's educational consultants are listed on page 197.



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PERSISTENCE WITH DRUGS IN GLAUCOMA, HYPERTENSION, AND HYPERLIPIDEMIA

(see page 221)

Goal

To review studies evaluating research on adherence or persistence to drugs used in glaucoma management.

Objectives

After reviewing this article, the reader should be able to:

1. define adherence and persistence;
2. describe the contributors to incomplete adherence/persistence;
3. recognize measures of adherence and persistence;
4. understand appropriate research methods for assessing adherence and persistence;
5. articulate the major findings from research into adherence and persistence.

Test Questions

1. Some patients may not take drugs as prescribed. What is the preferred term to describe the discrepancy between how a medication is intended to be taken and how it is actually taken?
 - (a) compliance
 - (b) persistence
 - (c) adherence
 - (d) time to discontinuation
2. There are numerous potential sources for discrepancies between how a medicine is intended to be taken and how it is actually taken. Which of the following is the *most* important reason to be concerned about such discrepancies?
 - (a) Patients want to be independent.
 - (b) An incorrect dosing regimen might have been prescribed.
 - (c) Patients who are more ill are more likely to take their medication.
 - (d) An incorrect dosing regimen might not achieve the intended therapeutic effect.
3. It seems plausible that certain characteristics of patients or drug regimens are correlated with adherence or persistence. Which characteristic is *most* consistently found to be correlated?
 - (a) patient age
 - (b) patient comorbidities
 - (c) patient psychosocial status
 - (d) characteristics of the regimen
4. Of the characteristics of medication regimens, which of the following is the *most* consistently observed contributor to heightened adherence?
 - (a) once-daily regimen
 - (b) multiple medications
 - (c) medications without noticeable adverse effects
 - (d) medications that are highly effective
5. Studies of persistence to therapy based on survival analysis methods applied to a cohort of patients initiating therapy have several advantages. Which of the following is *not* an advantage of this research method?
 - (a) ensures that patients start observation from a common reference point
 - (b) allows for inclusion of individuals regardless of length of follow-up
 - (c) includes both new and prevalent users of a drug
 - (d) can report proportions adherent at 6 or 12 months
6. The MPR is generally defined as the dispensed supply of medication in days, divided by days in the interval, most often a fixed interval of 12 months. The ease of this calculation may obscure a potential bias of the measure. How might the MPR bias a study of adherence?
 - (a) Patients are observed for varying amounts of time.
 - (b) Patients who do not meet the fixed time window of observation differ in their adherence from those who do.
 - (c) Patients differ in adherence.
 - (d) Patients have a constant adherence over time.
7. Automated pharmacy databases provide a number of advantages in studies of adherence. Which of the following is *not* an advantage of automated pharmacy databases?
 - (a) subject to recall bias
 - (b) inexpensive
 - (c) cover large numbers of patients
 - (d) do not influence patient persistence
8. Glaucoma, the leading cause of irreversible blindness, is treated with medications that reduce and control intraocular pressure. Which of the following statements about glaucoma is *true*?
 - (a) It involves a direct toxic effect on the optic nerve.
 - (b) Treatments reverse the loss of ganglion cells and associated blindness.
 - (c) Current therapies are targeted at lowering IOP.
 - (d) Topical ocular hypotensives are ineffective.
9. Pharmacy database studies of adherence to prescribed medication in hypertension and hyperlipidemia serve as an external benchmark for studies of glaucoma therapy. Which of the following is a similarity in the disease states that make them appropriate benchmarks?
 - (a) All are acute.
 - (b) All require lifetime maintenance therapy.
 - (c) All have clear symptoms.
 - (d) All have relatively little research regarding adherence.

Answer sheet appears on page 259.

- 10.** Different drugs or drug classes are associated with different levels of adherence or persistence. Which of the following statements regarding this is *true*?
- (a) Angiotensin II receptor antagonists and ACE inhibitors are associated with the highest adherence among antihypertensive medications.
 - (b) Diuretics are the antihypertensive drugs with the highest adherence.
 - (c) Adherence to statins for hyperlipidemia is lower than adherence to bile acid sequestrants.
 - (d) Topical β -blockers for glaucoma treatment have a lower risk of discontinuation than latanoprost.
- 11.** Numerous studies of persistence to therapy have resulted in several notable findings of correlates of persistence. Which of the following is a notable finding?
- (a) Age is consistently correlated with persistence.
 - (b) Sex is consistently correlated with persistence.
 - (c) Certain drug classes are consistently correlated with persistence.
 - (d) Patient comorbidities are consistently correlated with persistence.