A LITERATURE REVIEW TO EXPLORE THE LINK BETWEEN TREATMENT SATISFACTION AND ADHERENCE, COMPLIANCE AND PERSISTENCE

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Background: The association between treatment satisfaction and medication-taking behaviors including adherence, compliance and persistence is clinically intuitive. Studies of patient satisfaction with specific treatments that show a significant improvement in patient treatment satisfaction generally conclude that this may increase patient compliance, adherence or persistence without, however, specifically demonstrating this link.

Aim: This review explored the published evidence on the link between patient reported satisfaction with treatment and their compliance, adherence and/or persistence.

Methods: Articles published from January 2005 to November 2010 assessing compliance, adherence or persistence and treatment satisfaction were identified through a literature search in Medline, Embase and PsychInfo. Abstracts focusing on both treatment satisfaction and at least one medication-taking behavior were preselected and ranked according to relevance. The most pertinent abstracts were reviewed by two independent researchers who selected articles for inclusion according to the pertinence of the study results. The articles were reviewed in detail and a data summary table was created to summarize the main study attributes for each identified study examining the link between satisfaction and medication-taking behaviors.

Results: The database searches yielded 1278 references. Two hundred and eighty-one abstracts met the preselection criteria and 56 were selected by the two independent reviewers. Of the 56 studies included, 15 were RCTs, 8 non-randomized clinical trials, and 33 observational studies, either longitudinal or cross-sectional. The articles included did not provide consensual definitions of satisfaction, adherence, compliance or persistence; adherence and compliance were often used interchangeably and various methods were used to measure these concepts. Of the 56 studies, 20 studies evaluated the link between satisfaction and compliance or persistence. All studies showed a positive association between treatment satisfaction and medication-taking behavior, i.e. the most satisfied patients were the most compliant or persistent or conversely, the least satisfied were the least compliant or persistent. Overall, 16 demonstrated a statistically significant link between satisfaction and compliance or persistence. Of these, ten studies demonstrated a significant link between satisfaction and compliance, two studies showed a significant link between satisfaction and persistence and eight studies demonstrated a link between either a related aspect or a component of satisfaction (e.g. treatment convenience) or medication-taking behaviors (e.g. intention to persist). No study showed a link between satisfaction and the full multidimensional concept of adherence. Of the 20 studies, four compared treatment frequency or route of administration. The methods used to evaluate the link were varied in terms of the tests used and their complexity: 2 studies reported the link using descriptive statistics such as percentages and 18 used statistical tests, such as Spearman's correlations or logistic regressions.

Conclusion: Our review of the empirical evidence on treatment satisfaction and medication-taking behaviors identified
few studies that evaluate the statistical association between satisfaction and medication-taking behaviors. The available data suggested that greater patient satisfaction with treatment was associated with better compliance and improved persistence and that greater satisfaction or compliance were associated with lower regimen complexity or treatment burden.

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