ACCEPTABILITY OF LONG-TERM TREATMENT: WHAT IS IT, AND HOW CAN IT BE ASSESSED?

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**Background:** Understanding the link between patients' beliefs and behaviour may help explaining patients' behaviour with medication. Evaluate how patients' personal experience of their treatment results in their decision to accept taking it or not remains to be explored more thoroughly. Acceptability is hypothesised to be the result of the balance patients assess between their medication's advantages and disadvantages, based on their personal experience with the medication, and is assumed to be a predictor of patient adherence.

**Aim:** The aim of the work was: 1) to explore the concept of acceptability of a medication; 2) to develop a self-reported generic questionnaire evaluating patient acceptability of long-term medications.

**Methods:** A literature review was conducted using keywords related to acceptability, perceptions, motivations and barriers linked to treatment. Exploratory interviews were performed with 5 pharmacists and 19 patients. They were recorded, transcribed verbatim and systematically analysed in order to complete the initial conceptual model. Items of the questionnaire were generated for each concept identified, using patients' words. The resulting test version was tested for relevance and comprehension with 5 patients and revised accordingly; the new version was tested on a second set of 5 patients and revised to create the pilot version of the questionnaire.

**Results:** Items generated for each concept identified were organised into 6 domains: drug characteristics, duration, constraints, side-effects, efficacy and global acceptability of treatment. Except for a few items that were modified or deleted following patients’ suggestions and some minor modifications in the answer choices, the questionnaire was globally well accepted, easy to complete, and considered relevant and appropriate by patients. The pilot version of the ACCEPT questionnaire contains 32 questions divided into the same 6 domains as the test version.

**Conclusion:** The existence of the hypothesised concept of medication acceptability was confirmed. The ACCEPT questionnaire will allow assessment of the acceptability of a wide range of long-term medications based on patient experience. Further study will examine how well this measure predicts and explains adherence to these medications.

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