

Actions to Improve Medication Adherence During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Europe



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BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

- The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) project “European Network to Advance Best practices & technoLOGY on medication adherence” (ENABLE) aims at raising awareness and broadening knowledge on medication adherence (MA). Working Group 1 examines how MA is managed across Europe.
- The COVID-19 pandemic affected people’s lives in Europe in several ways, most likely also affecting their MA.
- In this study, the aim was to gain knowledge on specific Actions and initiatives to improve MA during the COVID-19 pandemic in European countries.

METHODS

- A cross-sectional, online survey on management of MA was carried out from 21st of April to 30th of June in 2021.
- The survey consisted of questions on respondents’ background information and 10 open-ended questions on management of MA. The questionnaire was piloted (n=12).
- COST ENABLE members from 39 countries were asked to disseminate the survey to key-opinion leaders (i.e., MA experts) from health, academic, and governmental institutions, and patient associations with the aim of 5 respondents per country.
- Answers to open-ended questions were analysed using the Framework Method. A group of researchers divided into pairs conducted the qualitative analysis, each pair being responsible of different questions.
- In this poster, the results on the question on actions to improve adherence during the pandemic are presented.

RESULTS

- There were 140 respondents from 35 COST countries.
- Most of the respondents (n=74) represented a research/academic organization, followed by hospital (n=39), primary care (n=27), and community or hospital pharmacy (n=24).
- The most common answer among the respondents was that there were no specific actions or initiatives to improve MA, followed by not being aware of any actions (Table 1).
- Of reported actions, telemedicine was the most common.
- The class “Other” included, for example, education of healthcare professionals, unspecified national actions, specific guidelines, and financial support.

Table 1	n	Countries, n
None	57	27
Not aware of any actions	32	15
Telemedicine	22	14
Other	15	13
Easier access to medicines	11	8
Public information & education	9	9

CONCLUSIONS

- Most European countries seem not have had actions specifically aimed at improving MA during the pandemic.
- Many actions are known to have been implemented to maintain access to care and medication also during the pandemic, but the respondents may not have seen these as specific actions to improve MA.

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