

Influence of patients' beliefs about the disease and medication in adherence to antihypertensive therapy

Cabral Ana, Ribeiro Paula, Fernandez Llimos Fernando, Caramona Maria Margarida, Castel Branco Maria Margarida, Figueiredo Isabel Vitória

Background The lack of adherence to antihypertensive therapy is a problem of great magnitude. Being adherence to medication a complex concept, influenced by multiple factors, understanding the causes of patient's non-adherence will enable the development of more effective interventions to improve adherence to therapy. Patient's beliefs about the disease and medication is a possible underlying factor that may influence adherence to antihypertensive therapy.

Purpose The objective of this study is to evaluate the influence of patients' beliefs about the disease and medication in adherence to antihypertensive therapy.

Method This study was conducted in community pharmacies. All adult patients with a prescription of at least one antihypertensive drug or who had been taking antihypertensive therapy for more than 3 months were invited to participate. Sociodemographic and patient-related data were collected and the questionnaires Beliefs about Medicines Questionnaire (BMQ) and Maastricht Utrecht Adherence in Hypertension (MUAH) were applied. Statistical analysis were performed using SPSS. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Coimbra (024-CE-2018).

Findings A total of 197 patients participated in the study, with a mean age of 65.82 ± 12.15 years. The BMQ-Needs score was 19.85 ± 3.085 and the BMQ-Concerns score was 16.32 ± 4.780 , with the difference being 3.53 ± 5.508 . The mean of the MUAH score was 127.84 ± 17.44 . A statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.529$, $p < 0.01$) was found between the scores of the two questionnaires. Correlations with statistical significance were also found between the two BMQ subscales (needs and concerns) and the four dimensions of MUAH (positive attitudes towards health care and therapy, lack of discipline, aversion towards medication and active coping).

Conclusion Patients with a more positive balance between needs and concerns regarding medication were more adherent to antihypertensive therapy. The higher the needs and the lower the concerns regarding the disease and medication, the patients' attitudes towards health care and therapy are more positive. Also, the greater the concerns, the higher the lack of discipline and aversion towards medication presented by the patients. These results reinforce the important role pharmacists can play in achieving more positive clinical outcomes by implementing measures that increase patients' perceived need for treatment and demystify negative beliefs about medication.