



Special Focus on Adherence to Therapy

*Lisa Taylor Skutnik PT, MA, MA,
Executive Vice President of Clinical Programs*

Many factors have been associated with poor adherence to disease-modifying therapy in MS. These include injection anxiety, depression, perceived lack of efficacy, treatment fatigue, adverse events, cost, and forgetting. Recognizing these barriers and reinforcing factors associated with adherence can have a significant impact on your patient's experience with these medications. This issue highlights adherence research and resources for helping patients stay with their treatment regimen.

IMPROVING ADHERENCE TO IMMUNOMODULATION THERAPIES

Healthcare professionals can influence patients positively or negatively. In light of extensive data that support the benefits of early intervention, it is recommended that the medical team make a commitment to promoting acceptance and maintenance of immunomodulation therapy in the appropriate patients.

*Read the whole bulletin at:
nationalMSSociety.org/clinicalbulletins*

Optimizing Adherence to Treatment: Two Studies

The first step in improving adherence to therapy is identifying what influences a patient to abandon or stay with a medication. Two large-scale studies found common themes.

The Global Adherence Project (GAP)

Devonshire V, Lapierre Y, Macdonell R, et al., Eur J Neurol. 2011 Jan;18(1):69-77.

The Global Adherence Project, a European study of over 2,600 people with MS, found that the most common reasons for non-adherence were forgetting and injection-related reasons.

Read the abstract or article at: <http://bit.ly/P8daow>.

Factors that Influence Adherence with DMTs in MS

Treadaway K, Cutter G, Salter A, et al., J Neurol. 2009 Apr;256(4):568-76.

In the United States, a study of 798 people also found forgetting to be a key reason for non-adherence. Injection site reactions, patient expectations, depression, and support were also cited as factors related to adherence.

Read the abstract or article at: <http://1.usa.gov/Qh90dA>.

TALKING WITH YOUR PATIENTS ABOUT TREATMENT

This brochure recommends strategies for maximizing adherence and fostering realistic expectations about disease modifying therapies.

Get the PDF at: nationalMSSociety.org/clinicalbulletins.

Treating Depression Improves Adherence

Mohr D, Goodkin, D, Likosky W, et al., Arch Neurol. 1997;54(5):531-533.

This study followed 85 patients with MS; 48% of the participants reported new or increased depression within six months of starting interferon 1b therapy. Adherence was reported by 86% of the participants who received psychotherapy or antidepressant medication but by only 38% of those who received no treatment for their reported depression. Although the source of depression is unclear, these findings suggest that treating patient-reported depression increases adherence to treatment.

Read the abstract or article at: <http://bit.ly/TG8ESG>.

SELF-INJECTION
ANXIETY CURRICULUM

Self-injection anxiety counseling is a six-session CE-accredited program designed to teach people who are unable to self-inject due to anxiety or phobia how to successfully perform their own self-injections.

Access CE opportunity with clinician manual and patient workbook at <http://bit.ly/QDJWBR>.

Would you like to receive MS Professional Connection in an electronic format? Please e-mail us at eNews@nmss.org to provide us with your name and e-mail address.

Addressing Self-Injection Issues Improves Adherence

Injection anxiety is an important and promising target of psychological intervention during all periods of medication use.

Injection anxiety remains a long-term barrier to medication adherence in MS

Turner A, Williams, A, Sloan A, et al., Rehab Psych., 2009 Feb; 54(1): 116-121.

A U.S. study found that injection anxiety remained a significant barrier needing to be addressed even years into an injectable therapy regimen. The authors concluded that sustained adherence to disease-modifying therapy remains a challenge for a subset of individuals with MS well beyond the initial period of acclimation and that injection anxiety is an important and promising target of psychological intervention during all periods of medication use.

Read the abstract or article at <http://bit.ly/U6g9xZ>.

Addressing the need for increased adherence to multiple sclerosis therapy: can delivery technology enhance patient motivation?

Lugaresi A, Informa Healthcare, 2009 Sept;6(9):995-1002.

An Italian study looked at whether delivery technology, including adjustments to drug formulation and auto-injector devices, might enhance patient motivation.

Read the abstract or article at <http://bit.ly/QaZtaq>.

Tips to Maximize Adherence

- Build rapport with patient
- Set realistic expectations
- Monitor injection techniques
- Suggest auto-injector devices
- Manage depression
- Address anxiety
- Manage side effects
- Explore tickler methods
- Engage patient's family
- Explore financial support

Patient Resources

Starting a Disease-Modifying Therapy and Sticking with It: nationalMSSociety.org/DMadherence.

Easing the Stress of Injections: nationalMSSociety.org/download.aspx?id=95.

Breaking News

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved teriflunomide once-daily pills (Aubagio®) to treat relapsing forms of MS. Read more at: nationalMSSociety.org/aubagionews.



For additional information for health care professionals and MS researchers, including research and clinical updates, and professional publications and tools to support your practice, please visit our website at nationalMSSociety.org/PRC.