An Economic Review of Compliance With Medication Therapy in the Treatment of Schizophrenia


Schizophrenia is a common and devastating mental illness associated with significant economic and social effects. This study reviewed economic evaluations of compliance with antipsychotic medications in the treatment of schizophrenia to determine the role of compliance in the overall economic cost of schizophrenia.

The study covered research published from 1995 to 2002 that had evaluated compliance with treatment for schizophrenia. Literature searches were based on the MEDLINE, EMBASE, and Current Contents online databases, using standard MeSH terms for schizophrenia and treatment compliance. The search identified 16 papers that considered the economic implications of various levels of compliance with medication therapy.

The study found that a definitive relationship exists between compliance and the economic costs of schizophrenia, in that a lower rate of compliance is shown to lead to higher costs of overall clinical management. The majority of direct health costs related to schizophrenia are attributable to hospitalizations for initial episodes as well as later relapses. At least half of the relapses could be attributed to a lack of compliance with drug therapy, with the remainder linked to issues of treatment efficacy.

However, the full implications are difficult to fully quantify from the literature because of inadequacies in the reporting of rates based on comparable definitions of compliance and outcomes of treatment over time. The authors suggest collection of data on longer-term clinical outcomes as a means to improve future economic evaluations of schizophrenia treatments.

Link: [http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/reprint/54/4/508](http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/reprint/54/4/508)