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Psychological Factors and Adherence in Patients with Cardiovascular Illness

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Abstract

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death worldwide. Despite the availability of information on the importance of medication adherence and adopting healthy lifestyle habits, patients exhibit low adherence. This study aims to explore additional psychological factors to better understand what contributes to adherence. This cross-sectional preliminary study included a sample of 45 respondents diagnosed with cardiovascular illness, 46% of whom were female, aged between 27 and 75 years ($M = 52.66$; $SD = 12.71$). Data were collected in hospitals and general practitioner (GP) practices. Participants completed a sociodemographic questionnaire, the **Illness Perception Questionnaire** (Moss-Morris et al., 2002), the **General Self-Efficacy Scale** (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995), the **Adherent Behaviour Questionnaire** (developed by Skaldere-Darmudasa & Sudraba, 2022) assessing adherence behaviours such as medication intake, healthy lifestyle habits, and health monitoring, and the **Multidimensional Health Locus of Control Scale** (Wallston, Strudler Wallston, & DeVellis, 1978). Additionally, five custom questions assessed participants' knowledge about medication and their need for a better understanding of their illness. **Results.** Significant positive correlation ($p < 0.05^*$) between knowledge about medication intake, adherence behaviours, and self-efficacy. A negative correlation was observed between knowledge about medication intake and the desire to receive education on maintaining health. Furthermore, an **internal locus of control** correlated with **reliance on doctors** ($p < 0.01^{**}$), the **healthy lifestyle subscale** ($p < 0.05^*$), and **self-control** ($p < 0.05^*$). **Conclusions.** The preliminary findings suggest that knowledge about medication intake, a better understanding of the illness, and an internal locus of control contribute to improved adherence behaviours.

Keywords: health locus of control, self-efficacy, adherence behaviours, illness perception, knowledge of medication intake