

MEDICATION ADHERENCE ASSESSMENT

Medication nonadherence is a serious problem that not only affects the patient but also the health care system. Therefore, it's important to help your patients understand that poor medication adherence can lead to:

- Unnecessary disease progression and complications, even death.
- Reduced functional abilities and quality of life.
- Additional medical costs and doctor visits.
- Waste of medication.
- Increased use of expensive or specialized medical resources, such as nursing homes or hospital admissions.

Use these abbreviated questions from Simplified Medication Adherence Questionnaire (SMAQ)^{1,2} to take a quick assessment of a patient's adherence to their current treatment plan.

1. Do you ever forget to take your medication?

- No
 Yes If so, how often?

2. When you're feeling better, do you ever stop taking your medications?

- No
 Yes If so, how often?

3. Does the medication ever make you feel worse?

- No
 Yes If so, do you stop taking it?

4. Did you skip taking your medication during the last seven days?

- No
 Yes If so, how often?

5. Have you ever forgotten to take your medication during the weekend?

- No
 Yes

6. Over the past 3 months, how many days did you not take any medication at all?

7. Do you ever have difficulty affording your medication?

- No
 Yes If so, how often?

8. Are there any other reasons preventing you from taking your medication as prescribed?

- No
 Yes If so, what are they?

If a patient is found nonadherent to treatment, it's important to work together with their pharmacy to create an intervention plan.

The plan should include customized guidance strategies, such as medication-focused counseling, motivational interviewing and customized services, such as pillboxes, medication cards, calendars, coordinated refills and better follow-up.

¹Knobel et al. Validation of a simplified medication adherence questionnaire in a large cohort of HIV-infected patients: the GEEMA Study. *AIDS* 2002, 16:605-613.

²Morisky DE, Green LW, Levine DM. Concurrent and predictive validity of a self-reported measure of medication adherence. *Med Care* 1986, 24:67-74.