
Medication non-compliance

DEFINITION /PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Behavior of person and or caregiver that fail to coincide with health promoting or therapeutic plan agreed on by the person and health care professional.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Choices of daily living ineffective from meeting the goals of treatment or prescription program
- Increased illness symptoms
- Verbalized desire to manage the treatment of and prevention of sequelae from illness
- Verbalized difficulty with prescribed regimen
- Verbalization by patient that he or she did not follow prescribed regimen

ASSESSMENT:

History-

- Review the medical records (specialist evaluations, annual physicals, primary care provider notes, emergency room/hospitalization documents) for signs of patient noncompliance
- Communicate with the primary care provider about diagnoses and medical history.
- Communicate with family (when applicable) about amount of help given to patient and who is the primary caregiver assigned to help with medications.
- Communicate with previous provider(s) (assure medical documentation received).
- Ask about past and chronic health problems.
- Find out what medications the patient is currently using. In addition to prescription drugs, be sure to ask about all creams, lotions, sprays, and over-the-counter preparations like laxatives, sleep aids, and analgesics. Also ask about any vitamins, herbs, or dietary supplements. Record the dosage and frequency for each preparation. Assist with a current accurate list of these items.
- Is the patient allergic to any medications, foods, animals, insects, latex, or other substances?

Physical-Mental

- What were prior efforts to follow a medication regimen.
- Assess for related factors that may negatively affect success with following the regimen.
- Note the patient's individual perceptions of their health problems.
- Assess the patient's confidence in his or her ability to perform the desired behavior.
- Assess the patient's ability to learn or remember the desired health related activity.
- Assess the patient's (mental/technical) ability to perform the desired activity.
- Are there signs of confusion or depression that will trap the patient into thinking that there is no problem.

NURSING INTERVENTIONS

- Include the patient's needs/wants in planning the treatment regimen.
- Inform the patient of the benefits of adhering to the prescribed regimen.
- Tailor the therapy to the patient's lifestyle.
- Simplify the regimen. Suggest long-acting forms of medications, and eliminate unnecessary medications.
- Develop a system for the patient to monitor his or her own progress.
- Develop with the patient a system of rewards that reward a successful follow through.
- Concentrate on the behaviors that will make the greatest contribution to the therapeutic effect.
- If negative side effects of the prescribed treatment are a problem, explain that many side effects can be controlled or eliminated. Notify physician of side effects.
- If the patient lacks adequate support in following the prescribed treatment plan, initiate referral to a support group or a close family member willing to participate.
- Initiate physician involvement in a Home Health Agency referral. Sometimes, the patient may need a psychiatric home health RN to overcome hurdles.

PATIENT TEACHING

- Use a variety of teaching methods to match the patient's proffered learning style.
- Introduce complicated therapy one step at the time. Use audio/visual aids if available. There may be a simple, convenient "U-tube" video both you and patient can watch together. But, review the offering so that it is not too difficult to understand.
- Instruct patient in the importance of reordering medications 4 to 5 days before running out.
- Include significant others in explanations and teaching. Encourage their support and assistance in following plans.
- Allow the learner to practice new skills, provide immediate feedback on performance.
- Role-play scenarios when no adherence to the plan may easily occur. Demonstrate appropriate behaviors.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Assess the patient's religious beliefs or practices that affect health and disease management.
- Assess the patient's beliefs about the treatment plan.
- Determine to what degree the patient's cultural beliefs and personality contribute to altered health habits.

COORDINATING CARE WITH NURSING ASSISTANT

- Concentrate on the behaviors that will make the greatest contribution to the therapeutic effect.
- Tailor the therapy to the patient's lifestyle.
- Include the patient in planning the treatment regimen.
- Read and follow the care plan. Notify the nurse if the plan is not working, or that you have some ideas on how to improve on the plan.

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