



A Cross-sectional Study to examine the Association between Health Literacy and Medication Adherence amongst Dermatology Outpatients

Background & Hypothesis: Adequate health literacy is essential for optimal medication adherence and patient safety. This study seeks to examine the association between health literacy and medication adherence amongst dermatology outpatients and identify other determinants of adherence.

Methods: Cross-sectional, interviewer-administered survey questionnaire was conducted in National Skin Centre Out-patient Pharmacy from January to February 2019. Respondents who fulfilled the inclusion criteria (NSC patients/ caregivers, aged \geq 21 years, self-reported English proficiency, diagnosed with skin condition for at least 3 months) were recruited via convenience sampling. Health literacy and medication adherence were assessed with the use of validated instruments Medication Adherence Report Scale-5 and Newest Vital Sign respectively. Chi-square and two-sample t-test were used for bivariate analyses. Multi-variate logistic regression was used to determine factors associated with adherence.

Results: 500 respondents were recruited. The study population was mostly young (21–30 years old) and educated (university/post-graduate). Out of 500 respondents, 9.4% had inadequate health literacy and 69% had sub-optimal medication adherence. No association was found between health literacy and medication adherence (OR = 0.60, CI: 0.32–1.14). Increased risk of sub-optimal adherence included those prescribed with topical and oral medications compared to oral medications (OR_{adjusted} = 2.28, CI: 1.23–4.20), who self-perceived their current skin condition as ‘bad’ compared to ‘good’ (OR_{adjusted} = 2.06, CI: 1.13–3.74) and being single when compared to married individuals (OR_{adjusted} = 2.00, CI: 1.32–3.00).

Discussion & Conclusion: Although no association was found between health literacy and medication adherence, other determinants of medication adherence include type of prescribed medications, self-perception of current skin conditions and marital status. This warrants further study to optimise adherence in this patient population.