

Health Concepts

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The essence of effective treatment is compliance.

PREFACE

Healthcare compliance is a fundamental segment of every medical provider. It is the way of following rules, guidelines, laws, and regulations that relate with healthcare delivery. Although treatment strategies can certainly be improved by increasing physician compliance, it is as important, if not more so, to increase patient compliance. The patients themselves must be made to feel that they are taking responsibility for their own health status.

Patient compliance encompasses many things. It is not just the physical act of taking medication, but also taking the medication at the right time, at the correct dose, and in the right manner. It is also the ability to attend appointments as scheduled and to follow advice about lifestyle changes, such as giving up smoking, exercising, and eating a sensible diet. For patient compliance to be increased, patients need to be educated about their disease, be motivated to take the drugs prescribed to them, and make efforts to alter their lifestyle. They must be made more responsible for looking after their own risk factors and given the tools and advice to make this possible.

Most importantly, the medicines that physicians prescribe should be suitable for their purpose, have few adverse effects, simple dosing regimens and cost effective to make the whole treatment process efficient.

Awareness is the key.

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NUTRITIONAL FACTS

शहद (Hindi)
தேன் (Tamil)
తేనె (Telugu)



HONEY

Honey is a sweet fluid made by honeybees using the nectar of flowering plants. There are about 320 different varieties of honey, which vary in colour, odour and flavour. Honey contains mostly sugar, as well as a mix of amino acids, vitamins, minerals, iron, zinc and antioxidants.

- **Keeping blood sugar low:** Honey has a lower glycemic index than sugar. Helps enhance insulin sensitivity.
- **Improving lipid metabolism:** Honey lowers blood levels of triglycerides and LDL ("bad") cholesterol.
- **Reducing oxidative stress:** Antioxidative properties help reduce oxidative stress.
- **May prevent heart disease:** antioxidant and anti-inflammatory compounds help protect against atherosclerosis.
- **Protect against antibiotic resistance:** Honey may act as an inexpensive alternative to antibiotics.
- **Supports a healthy gut:** possesses prebiotic properties.
- **Helps treat anaemia:** Honey helps by building the oxygen-carrying capacity of the red blood cells.
- **Instant energy booster:** In honey, two sugars, fructose and glucose are separate and thus act as an instant energy source
- **Treats cough:** Apart from antimicrobial properties, honey also soothes the throat.
- **Treats wounds And burns:** Antiseptic properties and anti-inflammatory properties help in healing.
- **Nourishes your skin and face:** Honey is a fantastic moisturiser and works wonders on patches of dry skin.

NOTE: Honey is generally safe in adults and children older than age 1. Avoid giving honey – even a tiny taste – to babies under the age of 1 year.

Honey might affect blood sugar levels.

MEDICAL UPDATE

The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland that sits in front of the neck. Thyroid hormones play a vital role in regulating metabolism and energy use and influence almost all of the body's organs. Hypothyroidism, or an underactive thyroid, is when the thyroid gland produces too few hormones. Low levels of thyroid hormones can cause a wide range of signs and symptoms from changes in mental functioning to digestive issues.

Signs and symptoms of hypothyroidism

- Fatigue
- Weight gain
- Sore muscles and joints
- Mood and memory changes
- Feeling cold
- Constipation
- High cholesterol
- Slow heart rate
- Hair loss
- Dry skin and weak hair & nails
- Goitre (Thyroid gland swelling)
- Menstrual changes in women

PREVENTIVE PEARLS

There are several ways to keep your brain young and reduce the risk of developing neurological diseases. These include:

- Get mental stimulation
- Get physical exercise
- Improve your diet
- Improve your blood pressure
- Improve your blood sugar
- Improve your cholesterol
- Protect your head from injuries

"Everything in excess is opposed to nature."

-- Hippocrates.

What is polypharmacy?

In simple terms, 'polypharmacy' refers to the use of multiple medications. It's tough to find someone these days who isn't on some sort of prescription medicine. While this seems as a good thing as more people are receiving medication to treat what ails them, we must understand that there are risks that come with an increased reliance on prescription medication.

Polypharmacy is often defined as regularly taking five or more medicines but definitions vary in where they draw the line for the minimum number of drugs.

3 groups of polypharmacy
Excessive polypharmacy Concurrent use of ten or more different drugs.
Polypharmacy (PP) The use of five to nine drugs.
No polypharmacy Taking four or less drugs (included those taking no medicines).

Polypharmacy is often the consequence of having multiple long-term conditions, also known as multimorbidity. Thus, more common in older adults and younger groups of people with multiple chronic conditions.

Common causes of polypharmacy
Multiple comorbidities
Self medication - even supplements
Uncertain treatment goals
Multiple specialist consultation
Lack of holistic approach
Transitions of care , hospitalization
Isolation
Direct to the consumer advertising
Reluctance to change medications

- Polypharmacy leads to
- 1. **Adverse effects:** refers to an injury resulting from the use of a drug and refers to harm caused by a drug at usual dosages.
 - 2. **Drug interactions:** The use of multiple medications increases the potential for drug-drug interactions causing clinical response that differs from the response expected from the known effects of each of these two agents when given alone.
 - 3. **Prescribing cascades:** when additional drugs are prescribed to treat the adverse effects of other drugs by misinterpreting the side effects as a new medical condition.
 - 4. **Inappropriate therapy, or non-adherence:** leading to difficulty in clinical management.

Polypharmacy can have significant adverse effects on patients of any age, but an elderly patient is even more vulnerable. Patients and caregivers need to be aware of the common symptoms and signs of the side effects of polypharmacy.

Common symptoms of polypharmacy
Confusion
Anxiety
Depression
Loss of appetite
Falls & fractures
Tremors
Fatigue
Giddiness
Lack of alertness
Acute kidney injury
Dehydration

The key to address the issue of polypharmacy will be "Good prescribing".

Deprescribing Is an essential part of "Good prescribing".

Approach to Deprescribing
Planned & supervised by physician
Updating of medical records
Good doctor patient relationship
Clear inter-physician communication
Revised treatment goals
Review of all medications
Weigh medication benefits Vs. risks
Deprescribing - Stop / alter dosage
Periodic reporting and follow up.
Re-adjust medications if required.

A helpful nuance to consider is the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate polypharmacy rather than focusing solely on the number of medications a patient takes. For example, an older adult with heart ailment and diabetes, two common diseases, might take a daily aspirin, a statin, an ACE inhibitor, a beta blocker, and metformin. Such an individual meets a strict definition of polypharmacy based on a simple pill count, yet this polypharmacy might be necessary for preserving health.

END NOTE

Avoid risks of inappropriate polypharmacy. Consult your physician periodically and optimize your medications.

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