



Initial Impact of Telepharmacy on Specialty Medication Adherence

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Background

Over the last few years, video conferencing has emerged as a viable communication tool for healthcare providers and patients alike. It offers the opportunity for patients to chat with a specialty pharmacist from the comfort and privacy of their own homes. This is especially important when patients receive their first medication shipment. Patients are able to review their medication supplies, discuss potential side effects and proper storage procedures, address any questions and get personalized support.

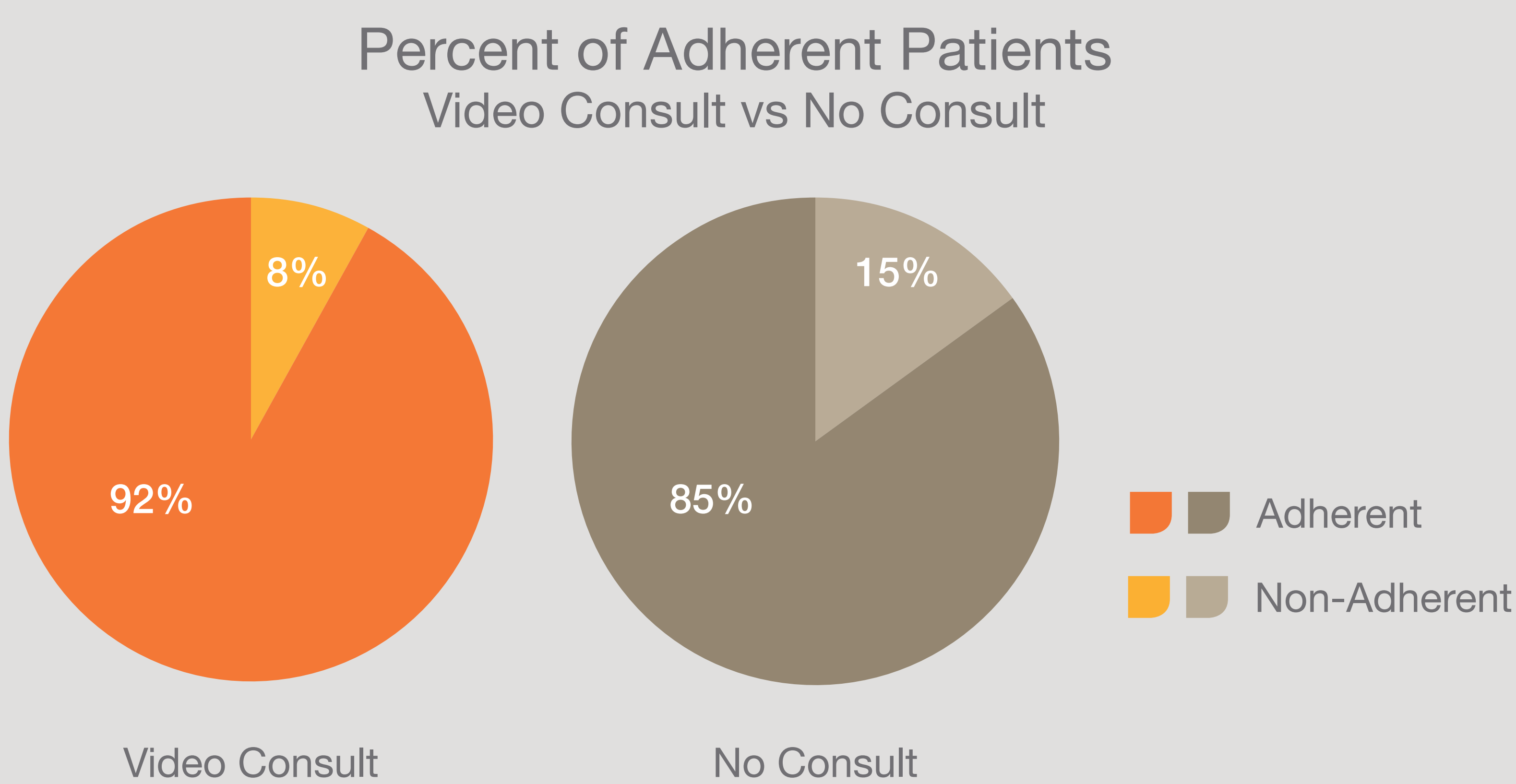
Objective

Patients with specialty conditions are faced with a unique set of challenges in regard to being adherent to their medications.¹ One-on-one pharmacist counseling from the comfort of the patient’s home can be an innovative and impactful intervention that can lead to improved adherence for specialty patients. This study analyzes the impact on adherence after an initial video conferencing session between pharmacist and patient at the start of treatment.

Methods

New to therapy patients who received a video conferencing session from the BrioRx[®] specialty pharmacy from April 1, 2013—May 31, 2014 were included in the analysis. The comparison group consisted of non-BrioRx patients who were also new to therapy during this time frame, and were continuously eligible from October 1, 2012—November 30, 2014. The two groups of patients were matched on age, gender and therapy. Adherence, as measured by cumulative medication gap (CMG), was measured for both groups for 180 days after the start of treatment. The odds ratio was computed to assess the likelihood of a patient having an adherence greater than or equal to 80%, with and without the video consultation.

Results



There were a total of 77 patients who received a video consultation and 117 total drug regimens. The distribution of disease states included: 25% hepatitis C, 22% rheumatoid arthritis, 18% multiple sclerosis and 35% other specialty conditions. The average age of patients receiving a consult was 46, with 56% of patients being female. Patients had significantly higher odds of being adherent if they received a video consult (OR=2.04; 95% CI,1.02-4.07).

Conclusion

This study highlights the benefit that video consultations can have on medication adherence for specialty pharmacy patients. This is especially important given the high cost and complex management of specialty medications.

References:
1) Touchette DR, Shapiro NL. Medication compliance, adherence, and persistence: current status of behavioral and educational interventions to improve outcomes. JMCP. 2008; 14(6): S2-S10.
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