

AZUR PHARMA

December 7, 2004

Dr. James Jackson
123 Any Street
Somewhere, New Jersey 07070

Adherence to Treatment with Antipsychotic Medication and Health Care Costs

Dear Dr. Jackson:

Our colleague and advisor, Dr. Dilip Jeste (VA and University of Southern California, San Diego), studied patients with schizophrenia, reporting in the American Journal of Psychiatry that he and co-authors* found, “... alarmingly high rates of antipsychotic non-adherence and associated negative consequences ...” Further, rates of non-adherence were not uniform across all types of antipsychotic medications – clozapine patients alone had significantly higher compliance rates, while in terms of adherence, individuals treated with “risperidone, olanzapine, and quetiapine were similar to those treated with conventional antipsychotic medication.”

Specifically, Gilmer et al., reviewed two years of Medicaid claims data in California, finding that less than half the patients were adherent with prescribed antipsychotic medications. Does this matter? Yes -- here's how:

1. The impact of non-adherence with antipsychotics was looked at in two ways: a) clinical impact and b) economic impact. Both were negatively affected by non-adherence – i.e., hospitalization rates increased, and the corresponding costs of care went up as well.
2. Looking at those patients who were adherent versus those who were either non-adherent or partially adherent, the authors found: Patients who were adherent had significantly lower hospital costs than the others.
3. Among the antipsychotic agents, clozapine treatment was associated with significantly higher patient adherence rates (60% for clozapine versus 34% – 40% on average for all other types of medicine).

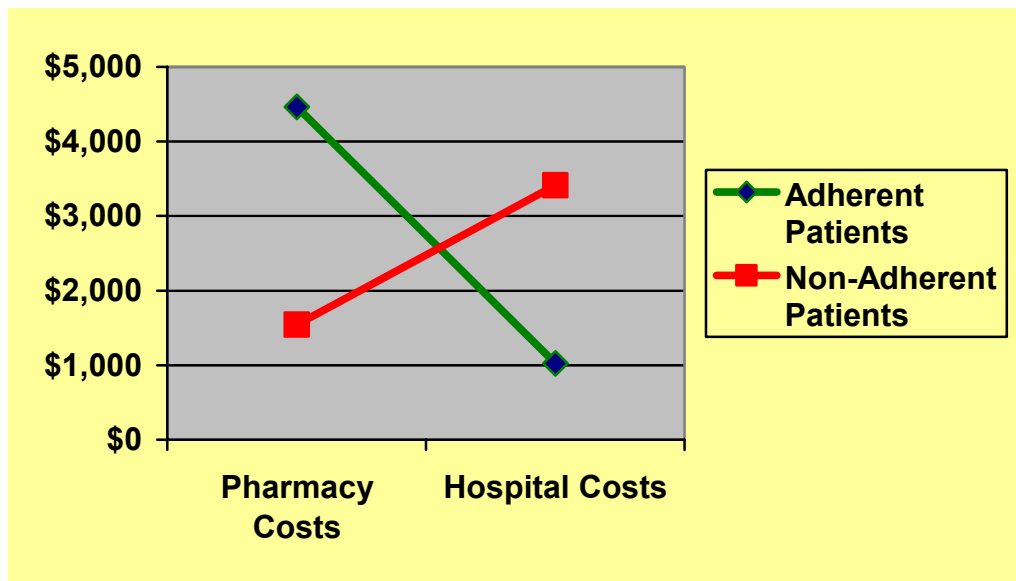
*Gilmer TP, Dolder CR, Lacro AP, Folsom DP, Lindamer L, Garcia P, Jeste DV. Adherence to Treatment with Antipsychotic Medication and Health Care Costs among Medicaid Beneficiaries with Schizophrenia. Am J Psychiatry, 161:4, 692-699 (April 2004).

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4. In addition to the type of antipsychotic medication, other factors contributing positively to medication adherence were a) living with a family and b) freedom from substance abuse.

The economic impact of reduced hospitalization rates associated with enhanced medication adherence is best seen graphically in the chart below which I've derived from the original article (all data expressed as average costs in dollars per patient):

The Hidden Cost of Non-Adherence with Antipsychotics: Increased Hospitalization



For details please refer to the complete Gilmer et al., article; I will be happy to make the full-text article available to you – just drop me a line. Thanks -- I'll be in touch again.

Sincerely,

Gilbert Honigfeld, Ph.D.

P.S. If you'd like to speak with me directly, please call at your convenience – my number is 973-538-7100.