

Why you don't take your medicine according to the instructions...

When we take our medicine according to the instructions it's called **adherence**

But there are *very many* definitions. Do these help you to understand why you don't take your medicine as you should?

Year	Definition	Reference
2007	"the extent to which patients follow the instructions they are given for prescribed treatments"	Munro, Lewin, Swart, & Volmink
2009	"the extent to which the patient's behaviour matches agreed recommendations from the prescriber"	Nunes et al.
2011	"initiating the prescription, actual dosing in relation to the prescription, and persisting with treatment"	Eliasson, Barber, & Weinman
2012	"the extent of conformity to treatment recommendations with respect to the timing, dosage, frequency, and duration of a prescribed medication"	Gadkari & McHorney
2013	"the process by which patients take their medications as prescribed. Adherence has three components: initiation, implementation, and discontinuation"	Kardas, Lewek, & Matyjaszczyk
2014	"correctly taking the full therapeutic course of treatment"	Bruxvoort, Goodman, Kachur, & Schellenberg
2014	"those who reported to have taken the treatment as recommended (in terms of timing and dosage) with no tablets remaining"	Banek, Lalani, Staedke, & Chandramohan
2015	"a ratio of the number of drug doses taken to the number of doses prescribed over a given time period"	Morrison, Stauffer, & Kaufman

Theoretical papers

Year	Definition	Reference
2002	"the extent to which a patient's behavior (in terms of taking medication, following a diet, modifying habits, or attending clinics) coincides with medical or health advice"	McDonald, Garg, & Haynes
2007	"% of Prescribed pills taken... >80% of prescribed pills taken... [non-adherence is] failing to collect medications for 2 consecutive months"	Kripalani, Yao, & Haynes
2015	"[non-adherence is] lack of correct behavior"	Tsega, Srikanth, & Shewamene
2015	"the extent to which patients follow the instructions given for prescribed medications"	Chew, Hassan, & Sherina
2015	"both compliance (proximity to treatment recommendation often simplified as the number of doses taken divided by the number of prescribed doses) and persistence (how long the medication is taken)"	Touskova et al.
2015	"self-reporting to have correctly taken the entire course of treatment"	Gore-Langton et al.
2015	"the extent to which [patients] have altered their dose, forgotten to use the medication, stopped taking it for a while, decided to miss out on a dose, and taken less than instructed... adherence being defined as answering "never" to all five"	Sandy & Connor

Practical papers

...and why we should think differently about it

No. So what's the problem? Are you lacking motivation? Some would blame *you*:

- "What we need are **new ways to improve human motivation** to take the medications... The holy grail here is to add motivation innovation to the mix"

Firlik, K., 2013. Why I went from neurosurgeon to entrepreneur

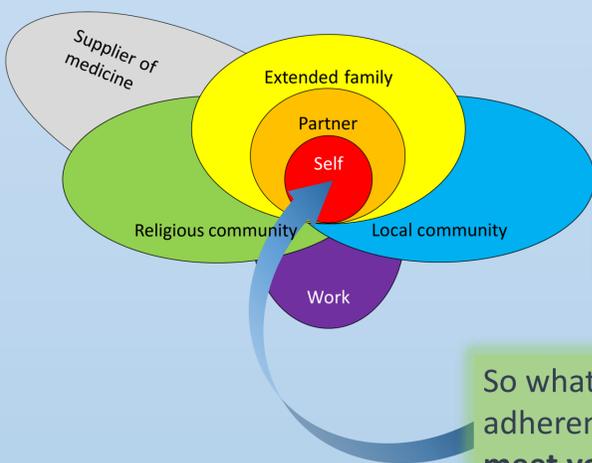
Is it that you don't feel you're being listened to by your doctor? Even though:

- "**At the centre of service delivery is the patient**"

Musgrove, P., et al., 2000. Health systems: improving performance

Perhaps that's part of it, because:

- Your doctor **doesn't actually know** what you want nor understand your consumption contexts
- He/she may not realise that you struggle with misunderstood instructions, inconvenience, tablet size, bad taste/bitterness, side-effects, lack of support, complex regimens, lack of storage, lack of access, missing co-requisites, stigma.... and **competing priorities!**



So who is responsible for your adherence? **You are!**

- "...the patient is **free to decide** whether to take the treatment or not"
- Nunes, V., et al., 2009. Clinical Guidelines and Evidence Review for Medicines Adherence: involving patients in decisions about prescribed medicines and supporting adherence. Royal College of General Practitioners, London, UK.
- But you must also accept the consequences of your decisions! We are all responsible for the results of exercising our DIY healthcare rights

So what does this mean for our understanding of adherence? We need to move from measuring adherence by an external measure to one which takes account of **you!** You take your medicine to **meet your needs in context**. Hence we must redefine adherence to be truly patient-centric...

"Adherence is using skills and resources to follow an externally imposed pattern of behaviour sufficiently to achieve the patient's objectives in context"

Implications of this definition include:

- Pharmaceutical manufacturers must understand patients more deeply so that **medicine formulations** can take better account of patient objectives and contexts
- **Patient information** must be available, comprehensible and consistent
- Practitioners must acknowledge where the power lies and **educate patients**
- The focus must then shift from arcane calculations to **guiding patients** on how best to achieve *their* objectives in context

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