

Effectiveness of a Nurse-Led Psychoeducation Program on Medication Adherence Among Patients with Schizophrenia

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Abstract

Schizophrenia is a chronic psychiatric disorder requiring long-term pharmacological treatment. Poor medication adherence is a common challenge and is associated with relapse, rehospitalization, and poor quality of life. Psychoeducation programs led by nurses have been identified as an effective strategy to improve patients' understanding of illness and adherence to medication. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a nurse-led psychoeducation program on medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest control group design was used. A total of 100 patients diagnosed with schizophrenia were selected from the psychiatric outpatient department of a tertiary care hospital and divided into experimental (n=50) and control (n=50) groups. The experimental group received a structured nurse-led psychoeducation program focusing on illness awareness, medication benefits, side-effect management, relapse prevention, and family support. The control group received routine care. Medication adherence was assessed using the Medication Adherence Rating Scale (MARS). The mean adherence score in the experimental group increased from 4.2 ± 1.5 to 8.3 ± 1.2 after the intervention, while the control group showed only a slight improvement from 4.4 ± 1.6 to 5.6 ± 1.4 . The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The findings suggest that nurse-led psychoeducation significantly improves medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia. Incorporating psychoeducation into routine psychiatric nursing care can enhance treatment outcomes and reduce relapse rates.

Keywords: schizophrenia, psychoeducation, medication adherence, psychiatric nursing, mental health education.

INTRODUCTION

Schizophrenia is a severe mental disorder characterized by disturbances in thought, perception, emotion, and behavior. It affects approximately 24 million people worldwide and often leads to significant disability and impaired social functioning. Long-term antipsychotic medication is essential for symptom control and relapse prevention.

However, medication non-adherence remains a major challenge in the management of schizophrenia. Studies suggest that nearly 40–60% of patients with schizophrenia do not adhere adequately to prescribed medication regimens. Poor adherence can lead to relapse, repeated hospitalizations, and increased healthcare costs.

Several factors contribute to medication non-adherence, including lack of insight into illness, medication side

effects, stigma, poor social support, and inadequate understanding of treatment. Psychoeducation is an evidence-based approach designed to improve patients' knowledge of illness and treatment, thereby promoting adherence and self-management.

Psychiatric nurses play a crucial role in delivering psychoeducation because they have continuous interaction with patients and families. Nurse-led psychoeducation programs may include information about illness, medication management, coping strategies, relapse prevention, and lifestyle modification. Such programs have shown promising results in improving medication adherence and overall mental health outcomes.

Therefore, the present study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a nurse-led psychoeducation program on medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia.

OBJECTIVES

Primary Objective

To evaluate the effectiveness of a nurse-led psychoeducation program on medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia.

Secondary Objectives

1. To assess the level of medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia before and after intervention.
2. To compare medication adherence between experimental and control groups.
3. To determine the association between medication adherence and selected demographic variables.

Group	Sample
Experimental group	50
Control group	50

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling.

Inclusion Criteria

- Patients diagnosed with schizophrenia according to DSM-5 criteria
- Age between 18 and 60 years
- Receiving antipsychotic medication
- Willing to participate in the study

Exclusion Criteria

- Patients with severe cognitive impairment
- Patients with comorbid substance use disorder

INTERVENTION: NURSE-LED PSYCHOEDUCATION PROGRAM

The psychoeducation program consisted of **four structured sessions (45 minutes each)** conducted over two weeks.

Session Content

1. Understanding Schizophrenia

Section B – Medication Adherence Rating Scale (MARS)

Score Range	Interpretation
0–3	Poor adherence
4–6	Moderate adherence
7–10	Good adherence

HYPOTHESIS

H1: Patients who receive nurse-led psychoeducation will demonstrate significantly higher medication adherence compared with those receiving routine care.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Quasi-experimental pretest–posttest control group design.

Setting

Psychiatric outpatient department of a tertiary care hospital.

Sample Size

100 patients diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Symptoms, causes, and course of illness

2. Importance of Medication Adherence

Benefits of regular medication and consequences of non-adherence

3. Managing Medication Side Effects

Common side effects and coping strategies

4. Relapse Prevention and Family Support

Early warning signs, stress management, family involvement

Educational materials such as **pamphlets, charts, and interactive discussions** were used.

DATA COLLECTION TOOL

Section A – Demographic Variables

- Age
- Gender
- Duration of illness
- Education level
- Employment status

RESULTS

Table1: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Experimental (n=50)	Control (n=50)
Age 18–30	15	13
Age 31–45	20	22
Age 46–60	15	15
Male	30	28
Female	20	22

Table2: Mean Medication Adherence Scores

Group	Pretest Mean $\pm$ SD	Posttest Mean $\pm$ SD
Experimental	4.2 $\pm$ 1.5	8.3 $\pm$ 1.2
Control	4.4 $\pm$ 1.6	5.6 $\pm$ 1.4

Table3: Adherence Level After Intervention

Adherence Level	Experimental	Control
Good adherence	36	18
Moderate adherence	10	20
Poor adherence	4	12

Graphical Representation

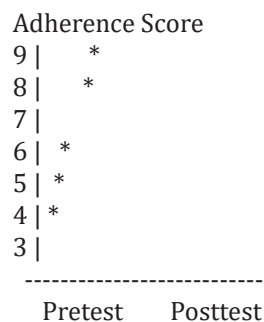


Figure1: Medication Adherence Improvement

The experimental group demonstrated a marked increase in medication adherence after psychoeducation.

DISCUSSION

The results of the present study indicate that the nurse-led psychoeducation program significantly improved medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia. The mean adherence score increased from 4.2 to 8.3 in the experimental group compared with 4.4 to 5.6 in the control group.

These findings are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that psychoeducation improves treatment adherence and reduces relapse rates in schizophrenia. Psychoeducation helps patients understand the nature of their illness, recognize the importance of medication, and manage side effects effectively.

Nurse-led educational interventions also provide emotional support and encourage family involvement, which further

enhances adherence and treatment outcomes.

Thus, integrating psychoeducation into routine psychiatric nursing care can significantly improve patient outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that a nurse-led psychoeducation program significantly improves medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia. Structured educational interventions help patients understand their illness, adhere to treatment, and prevent relapse. Psychiatric nurses should incorporate psychoeducation as a standard component of mental health care.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PSYCHIATRIC NURSING

- Integration of psychoeducation into routine psychiatric care
- Training nurses in mental health education strategies

- Promoting family participation in treatment
- Enhancing patient awareness and self-management

LIMITATIONS

- Small sample size
- Single-center study
- Short follow-up period

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conduct multicenter randomized controlled trials
- Evaluate long-term adherence outcomes
- Develop digital psychoeducation programs for psychiatric patients

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Cite this article: Mr Abhilash K S, et.al. *Effectiveness of a Nurse-Led Psychoeducation Program on Medication Adherence Among Patients with Schizophrenia International Journal of Research in Medical and Clinical Sciences*. 2026; 4(1): 87-90.

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