

Study Results: Adherence to RA Medication

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Patient data from the OBRI was used to look at why patients may or may not take their medications as prescribed by their doctor. Data was collected on the reasons that both doctors and patients reported for patients not taking medications as prescribed. The reasons were then categorized by frequency under each of the five factors the World Health Organization identifies for patients not taking medications as prescribed: personal reasons (41%), health care system (24%), treatment plan (18%), health status, including health conditions in addition to RA (6%), social and economic status (4%).

Characteristics of study patients starting from their time of enrolment into OBRI were also factored in. It was determined that patients who did not take medications as prescribed were younger and had higher income and education than those who did take medications as prescribed. There were no significant differences between patients who did or did not take their medications based on how long they had had RA, whether they smoked, had private health insurance, had other health conditions or experienced varying levels of pain and functional ability.

Some reasons that patients reported for not taking medications as prescribed were: personal assessment of their treatment needs, concerns about side effects, and forgetting to take medications. Thirty-three percent of OBRI patients reported not taking their medications at times of lower disease activity. These study results suggest that patients stop taking medications when they are feeling better.