

COMPREHENSION AND COMPANIONSHIP IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AS PREDICTORS OF TREATMENT ADHERENCE: A PROSPECTIVE STUDY

U. Nitzan^{1,2}, E. Hirsch¹, I. Luria^{2,3}, S. Aviram⁴, G. Walter⁵, Y. Bloch^{1,2}

¹Shalvata Mental Health Center, Hod Hasharon, ²Sackler School of Medicine, Tel-Aviv University, ³Outpatient Clinic, Abarbanel Mental Health Center, Tel-Aviv, ⁴Department of Psychology, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel, ⁵Discipline of Psychiatry, University of Sydney, Sydney, NT, Australia

Introduction: Lack of adherence to recommended treatment poses major clinical and economic challenges for psychiatry, and requires further study.

Objectives and aims: We aimed to prospectively investigate the association between the level of understanding of psychiatric emergency department (ED) discharge recommendations and presence of a companion with short term treatment adherence.

Methods: Sixty subjects were evaluated twice: upon ED discharge and a month later. Instruments included a structured questionnaire based on the MacArthur Competence Assessment Tool for Treatment, MMSE, and corroboration of data with the computerized hospital medical file.

Results: There was a significant association between patient understanding and adherence with medication instructions ($p < .01$) and adherence to psychiatric follow-up ($p < .05$). There was also an association between the presence of a companion and adherence to medication instructions ($\chi^2(1)=7.0$, $p < .01$).

Conclusions: Ensuring patients' understanding of treatment recommendations and encouraging the company of patients are achievable, practical strategies that may improve adherence and thereby promote better outcomes.