(S145) DEVELOPMENT OF A SCALE TO MEASURE BARRIERS TO DISEASE-MODIFYING THERAPY ADHERENCE IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

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Background: Patients with multiple sclerosis (MS) have a number of options when it comes to choosing a disease-modifying therapy (DMT) with their health-care professional. All currently available therapies approved for the treatment of MS are injection-based. Objectives: To develop a survey to investigate the factors underlying poor adherence to MS therapies. Methods: A review of the scientific literature was undertaken, in parallel with a qualitative review of an online discussion forum from the MS community on the website PatientsLikeMe.com. From this analysis, items were generated to create a questionnaire to quantify issues related to barriers to adherence and treatment burden. Cognitive debriefing was used to refine the items. An online sample was recruited from the PatientsLikeMe MS site for purposes of exploratory analysis and psychometric validation. The questionnaire was administered via online survey through PatientsLikeMe.com. Results: A total of 445 respondents completed the online survey, yielding a response rate of 37%. Most respondents were female (n = 353, 79%), with a mean (SD) age of 46 (10) years. Thirty-one percent of patients reported missing at least one dose of their DMT. The number of patients reporting missing a dose of their medication in the past 28 days varied significantly between DMTs (P < .001). The barriers to adherence most likely to be rated as either “moderately” or “extremely” important to patients who missed a dose were “Did not feel like taking my medication” (38%), “Memory problems” (35%), “Tired of taking my medication” (33%), “Too busy” (32%), and “Side effects of the injection” (27%). Twenty-nine percent of patients reported difficulty in grasping or holding their DMT injector. Conclusions: A number of factors affecting adherence to DMTs were identified by the questionnaire. Our tool identifies these and could be used in clinical practice to improve adherence and maximize the benefit of DMTs. Further research is needed to establish the validity of the instrument.

Supported by: Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation


Keywords: disease-modifying treatment in MS