ACHIEVING CONCORDANCE IN MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: A WORKSHOP PROGRAM FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS SPECIALIST NURSES

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Background: Nonadherence to disease-modifying drug (DMD) therapy can adversely affect treatment outcomes. As the first point of contact with patients and their families, UK multiple sclerosis (MS) specialist nurses are in a unique position to help improve adherence by encouraging patients to take an active role in informed treatment decisions and managing expectations of treatment outcomes. Objectives: We developed a program of workshops to highlight the need for partnerships between MS nurses and patients in shared decision-making for initiating DMDs, which may help foster adherence to treatment in the long term. Methods: The Achieving Concordance in MS (ACMS) initiative consists of a program of 1-day workshops designed to be practical and interactive. Each workshop is run by two MS specialist nurses, covering topics such as factors influencing adherence, key concepts in achieving concordance (the process of negotiation between health-care professional and patient in order to reach shared decisions), and the effects of nonadherence on disease outcomes. The format is an informal mixture of presentations, group discussions, and practical sessions, intended to help nurses integrate shared decision-making into routine clinical practice. Materials (eg, slides, DVD) are also supplied to enable nurses to run further meetings at their own centers. Results: To date, eight regional workshops have been held across the UK, with approximately 5 to 14 attendees in each. Speakers were involved from the outset of the project, participated in the development of materials, and adapted the format to accommodate audience needs. Feedback was very positive, with attendees commenting that the workshops were engaging and relevant to practice, and encouraged useful debate around the definitions of compliance, adherence, and concordance and their relevance to the management of MS. Conclusions: The ACMS workshop program provides training and information to help MS nurses incorporate shared decision-making into routine clinical practice, which may help promote patient treatment adherence over the long term and lead to improved treatment outcomes. The workshops also provide a valuable forum for discussing all areas of MS nursing in a format that is easily transferable to other health-care professionals.

Supported by: Merck Serono SA–Geneva, Switzerland, an affiliate of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany


Keywords: disease-modifying treatment in MS, nursing management in MS