



Gaining Patient Compliance in Wound Care

It's the "SIMPLE" way
to achieve optimal outcomes.

BY JOHN V. GUILIANA, DPM, MS

Wound care presents specific challenges for podiatrists. Patients have a sizable responsibility for determining the success of their treatment outcomes. While podiatrists diagnose and prescribe the treatment, patients ultimately have the responsibility of following directions. The World Health Organization estimates that 125,000 deaths each year are attributed to patient non-adherence. Additionally, 40% of

process are more likely to comply with the decisions made about their wound. It's therefore important that we help "compliant" patients become "concordant" patients. This can be achieved by removal of barriers that influence patient compliance through meaningful relationships and rapport with patients, and by implementing processes to support and improve patient compliance.

In 2005, researchers developed the "SIMPLE" compliance strategy to help patients follow the instruc-

Provide communication and develop trust through active listening and empathy.

Leave the bias by taking time to overcome cultural and language barriers.

Evaluate adherence by asking patients simply and directly if they are following their treatment plans.

Despite many obstacles to influencing patient compliance, there are effective strategies that can enhance patient wound care adherence, and many practice management software programs can help you in executing these strategies.

For optimum patient outcomes, it's necessary to understand the distinction between "compliance" (how well a patient follows their healthcare providers instruction), and "concordance" (how much the patient is involved in the decision-making process).

Clear and Concise Communication

It's essential to use simple language and avoid medical jargon. Your discussion should focus on the patient's diagnosis and their treatment plan. The importance of compliance and why it's necessary is also crucial, along with what can happen if patients don't follow instructions.

We should encourage patients to ask questions if they don't understand something or have any concerns and provide them with educational pre and after-care instructions so they can have all the information they need at hand, even after they leave the office. Patient education impacts their decision-making process. Digital communication is also important so use your practice management software to automate pre-care and aftercare instructions, so the message is consistent. This also provides a record of it being sent.

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nursing home admissions, and 10% of older patient hospitalizations each year are attributable to non-compliance, costing the healthcare system nearly \$300 billion.

For optimum patient outcomes, it's necessary to understand the distinction between "compliance" (how well a patient follows their healthcare provider's instructions), and "concordance" (how much the patient is involved in the decision-making process). This distinction is important because patients who are more involved in the decision-making

tions of their healthcare providers. While not a universal solution to patient non-compliance, portions of the strategy can be adopted by podiatrists to help mitigate wound care non-compliance:

Simplify the advice to bite-sized amounts that the patient can absorb.

Impart knowledge through clear instructions and shared decision-making.

Modify patient beliefs, where necessary, by addressing concerns about specific treatments and medications.



Compliance (from page 82)

Personalize the Care

A personalized protocol will build trust with the patient, which will increase patient engagement. Obviously, one size doesn't fit all when it comes to wound care. Not everyone requires a graft or biological dressing. Tailoring treatment plans to meet the unique needs and preferences of each patient is key.

Simple is Better

Obviously, a 2000-piece jigsaw puzzle is much more complicated than a 200-piece puzzle. Treatment plans are no different. If patients must navigate a complex plan, they're more likely to miss important steps or even give up completely. On the other hand, if treatment plans are straightforward, patients are more likely to adhere to them.

Offer appointment times that are as convenient as possible for patients and send them real time reminders to help them keep up with their care. Offering online bookings can make the process even more efficient.

Podiatrists can offer telehealth consultations and provide home care options, when possible. Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) can also help with this barrier.

Patient portals that are part of a cloud-based practice management software system make it even easier for patients to adhere to their treatment plans. Through a patient portal, patients can access post appointment instructions, recommendations, upcoming appointments, and other details all in one convenient location.

Address the Common Barriers to Wound Care Compliance

While there are many barriers to compliance that are not within our control, podiatrists have an obligation to understand and address the barriers that can be at least partially mitigated. For example, barriers related to costs can be a major issue,

especially for medications and treatments like biological dressings and grafts.

Podiatrists should be aware of their patient's financial state and help them find ways to afford their

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treatment, such as flexible payment options.

Barriers related to transportation might also prevent patients from attending appointments or filling prescriptions. Podiatrists can offer telehealth consultations and provide home care options, when possible. Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM) can also help with this barrier.

Build Trust and Rapport

Honest communication is a key element in fostering trust between the patient and a healthcare pro-

surveys of trust in the U.S. health-care system among the public and physicians. When asked why a patient might not trust their health-care provider, 25% of the respondents said it was because their phy-

sician doesn't spend enough time with them, and 14% said their physician doesn't know them or listen to them.

Monitor and Provide Patient Feedback

Continuous monitoring of a patient's treatment progress is obviously vital for success. But monitoring goes far beyond just the ongoing clinical assessment. For example, if a patient doesn't show up for an appointment, immediately follow up via email, text, or phone call to allow your office to address any concerns or barriers to adherence.

As an adjunct to the necessary wound measurements, serial pictures that can be placed in the patient's chart can also provide a patient with visual motivation and cues to stay on track.

Patient compliance turns your wound care treatments into actual progress. Without that compliance, even the best medicine is nothing more than just good advice! **PM**



Dr. Guiliana is a nationally recognized speaker and author on topics pertaining to medical practice management. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Podiatric Practice Management and holds a Master's Degree in Healthcare Management. He has authored numerous columns in various journals and is the co-author of *31½ Essentials to Running Your Medical Practice*, as well as *The Million Dollar Practice...Keys to Success*. Dr. Guiliana is currently a Medical Director of Podiatry for Modernizing Medicine's award-winning technology. He can be reached at John.guiliana@modmed.com.

vider. Patients must have confidence that their physician's recommendations will lead to improvement in their condition. Otherwise, they may look for alternative information online that contradicts their treatment plan, leading to non-compliance.

Taking the time to listen to patients, acknowledging their concerns, and treating them with dignity and respect are the building blocks of trust. We must also be sensitive to cultural differences that may influence patients' understanding of treatment recommendations.

In 2021, the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation (ABIM) commissioned NORC at the University of Chicago to conduct