UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
COMMUNICATION SCIENCES AND DISORDERS

Exploring Associations Between the Patient-Provider Relationship and Adherence to Treatment in Acquired Communication Disorders

By
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A Capstone Project submitted to the Communication and Sciences Disorders program in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master’s degree

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Motivation

Empathy, supportive, & understanding \(\rightarrow\) more motivated, attentive, follow through on assignments and recommendations

Conversely

Unsupported & misunderstood \(\rightarrow\) less inclined to adhere to work, physically/mentally attend class and appointments
INTRODUCTION

Patient adherence:

The follow-up of the patient to the agreed upon recommendations of their healthcare provider

Adherence to treatment results in:

• Improved quality of life
• Improved safety
• Better outcomes
What is aphasia?

**Definition:** An acquired language impairment resulting from brain injury that impedes the ability to express and understand language.

Presentations are variable.

**Prevalence:** ~2 million people in the US.

**Incidence:** ~180,000 new cases each year in the US.

(National Institute of Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, 2015)

**Causes:** stroke, head trauma, brain tumors, other neurological origins.
Terminology & Factors

Adherence vs. Compliance

Adherence: active patient role; patient & provider collaborate in developing/implementing treatment plan

Compliance: passive patient role; patient obeys instructions of their provider with little input

Variables contributing to adherence

| Relationship variables | Patient variables | Illness/symptom variables | Treatment variables | Organizational factors |
Significance

The way the clinical relationship – the alliance between patient and provider – is considered, approached, fostered, and developed may yield more effective outcomes for the patient.
Research Question:
How does the patient-provider relationship influence patient adherence to treatment in the rehabilitation of acquired communication disorders?

Project Assigned: Critically Appraised Topic
METHODS & RESULTS

4 ELECTRONIC DATABASES SEARCHED

27 ARTICLES & 1 BOOK INCLUDED

No literature now exists specific to communication disorders.
Search expanded to draw from several clinical disciplines
Qualities of Adherence

Important determinants of the patient-provider relationship:
1) Effective communication
2) Empathy
3) Trust
4) Patient-self awareness

Outcomes and Adherence

Outcomes relate to:
1) Impairment level improvement
2) Patient adjustment
3) Perceived effectiveness of treatment
4) Patient satisfaction
Communication

Quality of Information

- Verbal and nonverbal communication
- Clear, truthful, sensitive, empathetic

Improved adherence, patient understanding, patient satisfaction, patient improvement, recall of information, patient participation in exchange of clinical information

Patient as expert

- Patient is important part of care team
- Promoted through informal conversations

Goal achievement, improved rapport and cooperation, emergence/exposure of communication skills
Empathy

Ability to understand and share feelings of others

- Comprehend patient’s circumstance, feelings and perspectives
- Communicate that understanding/verify accuracy
- Act on that understanding in a meaningful way

Improved clinical competence, outcomes, patient satisfaction and adherence, and decrease of anxiety and distress
Trust

**Fiduciary relationships:** patients place complete trust, confidence, and reliance in their providers to act for the patients’ benefit

| Responsible for influencing patient behaviors | Develops through ongoing, thoughtful, and mutual communication over time |

Greater self-efficacy, expectations, motivation, adherence and outcomes
Patient self-awareness

An understanding of one’s own emotional, cognitive and physiological experience, as well as an understanding of how they come across to others

Better adherence, better alliance
Outcomes and Adherence

- Impairment level improvement
- Patient adjustment
- Perceived effectiveness of treatment
- Patient satisfaction
SUMMARY

The relationship between the patient and provider can influence adherence to treatment in several healthcare disciplines, and presumably with patients who have acquired communication disorders

- Relationship influences adherence
- Patients benefit from better patient-provider relationship
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

• Exploring the alliance and treatment adherence within the speech-language domain

• Training for clinicians
  • interpersonal skills
  • relational strategies
  • motivational enhancement techniques
  • strategies to support collaborative goal setting

• Exploring how cultural sensitivity impacts the alliance within speech-language domain

• Focusing on how therapy is constructed
**Clinician Directives to Improve Treatment Adherence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directive</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foster</td>
<td>Foster a positive relationship with your clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build</td>
<td>Build interpersonal skills that promote trust and empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt</td>
<td>Adapt communication style to be in sync with your clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Clear</td>
<td>Be clear, honest, sensitive, and receptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage</td>
<td>Engage in genuine, less formal conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allow</td>
<td>Allow time for the relationship to develop</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Treat     | Treat clients as experts in their own experience  
Value clients’ thoughts, feelings, knowledge and insight |
| Provide   | Provide clients with ample opportunity to express themselves |
| Be Mindful| Be mindful – clients who are more self-aware may be more adherent to treatment. Less self-awareness → more support |
REFERENCES


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