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## **Educating Nurses on Medication Adherence for Adderall in Adult Patients with ADHD**

ALEXINE KEJIKI NANSINLA  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Nursing

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Alexine Nansinla

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
and that any and all revisions required by  
the review committee have been made.

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Dr. Patricia Schweickert, Committee Chairperson, Nursing Faculty

Dr. Lilo Fink, Committee Member, Nursing Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost  
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2025

Executive Summary: Staff Education Project  
Educating Nurses on Medication Adherence for Adderall in Adult Patients with ADHD

by  
Alexine Nansinla

MS, Walden University, 2022

BS, University of Texas in Arlington, 2019

Executive Summary Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Nursing Practice

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## Summary

This doctoral project focused on a staff education initiative aimed at improving nursing knowledge about stimulant medication adherence, particularly Adderall, for adults with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Medication adherence in ADHD is often hindered by stigma, forgetfulness, and side effects, negatively impacting symptom management and patient quality of life. Nurses play a critical role in addressing these challenges through patient education and adherence support. The project was developed to answer the practice-focused question: Does the evidence support development of a staff education program regarding ADHD stimulant medication adherence in patients with ADHD that increases staff knowledge as compared pre to post education? Using the Johns Hopkins evidence-based practice model to assess evidence, the project identified 50 relevant articles, of which 20 were used to support this project. In a psychiatric private practice, the ADDIE model (analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation) guided program development, with pre- and posttests assessing eight nurses' knowledge. Two content experts validated assessment tools using the Content Validity Index (CVI) to ensure alignment with project goals. Findings supported improvements in staff knowledge with the pretest score averaging 65 percentage points and the posttest score increased on average 25 percentage points to 90. Deliverables included an educational presentation, pre- and posttest tools, and interactive case discussions. The project has important implications for nursing practice as enhanced adherence support can improve patient outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and foster trust. It also promotes positive social change by addressing ADHD stigma, advancing health equity, and empowering nurses to provide culturally competent care to diverse populations.

## **Background**

Adherence to stimulant medications, such as Adderall, for adult patients with ADHD remains a significant challenge in mental health practice. Nonadherence can lead to suboptimal symptom management, resulting in poor functioning, reduced productivity, interpersonal conflicts, and decreased quality of life (Biederman et al., 2020). Moreover, nonadherence contributes to a heightened financial burden on the healthcare system due to increased hospitalizations, emergency visits, and chronic care requirements (Price & Price, 2023). At the identified psychiatric private practice in Maryland, the lack of a structured education program and evidence-based strategies to address adherence challenges has created a critical practice gap. Nursing staff at the project site reported limited knowledge of effective adherence strategies, leaving them ill-equipped to support adult ADHD patients facing adherence challenges. This gap underlines the importance of implementing targeted education programs to empower nurses to play a proactive role in addressing medication adherence, thereby improving patient outcomes and enhancing the quality of care.

The project was guided by the following practice-focused question: Does the evidence support the development of a staff education program regarding ADHD stimulant medication adherence in patients with ADHD that increases staff knowledge as compared pre to post education? By addressing this question, the project aimed to create a sustainable, evidence-based solution to improve nursing practice and close the gap in supporting ADHD medication adherence. Ultimately, the goal was to bridge the gap

between the challenges of adherence and the role of nursing interventions to foster better patient outcomes, mitigate stigma, and improve overall care quality. The purpose of this doctoral project was to enhance nursing knowledge and equip staff with evidence-based tools to effectively address barriers to stimulant medication adherence. To address the identified gap in practice, a review of current literature was conducted using the Johns Hopkins Evidence-Based Practice Model to evaluate the factors contributing to poor adherence to stimulant medications in adults with ADHD and to identify evidence-based strategies that support improved adherence. Several factors contribute to poor adherence among adults with ADHD. Side effects of stimulant medications, such as appetite suppression and insomnia, often discourage patients from continuing treatment (Nauman et al., 2021). In addition, the stigma associated with taking ADHD medications, particularly stimulants, may lead to patients hiding their diagnosis or avoiding treatment altogether (Viscardi et al., 2024). Forgetfulness, a hallmark symptom of ADHD itself, can further hinder adherence to a consistent medication schedule (Alarachi et al., 2024). Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach grounded in evidence-based interventions. Evidence highlights several strategies to overcome these barriers effectively (Spalding et al., 2022). For example, Spalding et al. (2022) demonstrated that adherence interventions incorporating reminders, such as phone alarms and apps, alongside educational support, improved adherence rates and patient outcomes. Similarly, Thurn et al. (2020) emphasized the importance of addressing stigma through motivational interviewing and patient education, enabling patients to view stimulant medications as valuable tools for symptom management rather than a source of shame. In summary, the literature strongly supports the implementation of a staff education program as an

effective strategy to improve adherence to stimulant medications in adults with ADHD by equipping nurses with evidence-based tools to mitigate barriers and enhance patient outcomes.

The evidence supporting this change is strong and consistent. A comprehensive literature review identified 20 high-quality studies, including 12 randomized controlled trials (Level I) and eight quasi-experimental designs (Level II), demonstrating the effectiveness of educational interventions in improving adherence behaviors among adult ADHD patients (See Appendix A for the summary of the evidence and Appendix B for the synthesis of the evidence). This evidence consistently demonstrated that educational interventions targeting healthcare providers, particularly nurses, significantly improved adherence behaviors among adult patients (Danielsson et al., 2024). Furthermore, evidence underscored the critical role of nursing staff in fostering adherence through empathetic communication, tailored education, and collaborative goal setting with patients (Jeun et al., 2024). The strength of this evidence not only validated the need for a staff education program but also highlighted the potential for such interventions to yield measurable improvements in nursing practice and patient outcomes.

### **Staff Education Project Development**

The primary participants in this project were eight nursing staff members at the practice site, including six registered nurses (RNs) and two nurse practitioners (NPs). The RNs had an average of 5 years of experience in mental health care, while the NPs had been practicing for an average of 8 years, with a focus on psychiatric medication management. These participants were selected due to their direct interactions with adult ADHD patients and their critical role in addressing medication adherence challenges through patient education and support. The project followed a structured development

and implementation process using the ADDIE model (Ahmann & Saviet, 2024). This model guided the project by ensuring a structured approach from identifying the practice gap to evaluating outcomes. It aligned with the project by systematically developing and implementing evidence-based education while assessing its effectiveness in improving nursing knowledge on ADHD medication adherence. During the analysis phase, a gap in practice was identified through organizational assessments and stakeholder discussions, revealing that nursing staff lacked adequate knowledge and tools to support medication adherence. To develop the educational materials and assessment tools, the project team collaborated with two content experts, including a psychiatric nurse practitioner with over 10 years of experience in ADHD treatment and a clinical psychologist specializing in behavioral interventions for ADHD. These experts were selected based on their extensive knowledge of stimulant medication adherence strategies and experience in patient education. They reviewed and validated the educational content to ensure its relevance and effectiveness for nursing staff. These materials were informed by evidence-based practices and included a PowerPoint presentation (see Appendix C), case scenarios, and a 10-item pre- and posttest questionnaire designed to evaluate knowledge improvement (see Appendix D). The Content Validity Index (CVI) was used by the content experts to assess the validity of the questionnaire, with each item rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *not relevant*, 4 = *highly relevant*). The average CVI score was 0.92, indicating strong content validity and alignment with the project objectives. The educational program itself was also evaluated by participants using a 5-point Likert scale, with an average satisfaction score of 4.7/5, demonstrating high engagement and perceived usefulness.

The implementation phase involved delivering a virtual educational program over three sessions. The first two sessions were conducted during the first week of implementation, and the final session was held the following week to accommodate staff schedules and ensure maximum participation. Each session included an introduction to the project objectives, delivery of educational content, interactive discussions, and administration of the pre- and posttest questionnaires.

Evidence collection was conducted through pre- and posttest questionnaires administered to participants before and after all three educational sessions (Spalding et al., 2022). The questionnaires assessed participants' baseline knowledge of stimulant adherence strategies and evaluated knowledge improvement following the education. Data from the pre- and posttests were collected and analyzed to determine the effectiveness of the education program. The analysis involved comparing average scores before and after each session to identify improvements in knowledge. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and percentage changes, were used to obtain the results. Additionally, participant engagement during interactive discussions was observed and recorded on paper to assess the practical application of the strategies taught.

The evaluation process for this project was both formative and summative. Formative evaluation occurred during the development phase, where content experts reviewed and validated the educational materials and assessment tools. This ensured that the program was well-designed and aligned with evidence-based practices. Summative evaluation was conducted after the implementation phase to assess the overall effectiveness of the educational program. This included analyzing pre- and posttest results to measure knowledge improvement among participants. By

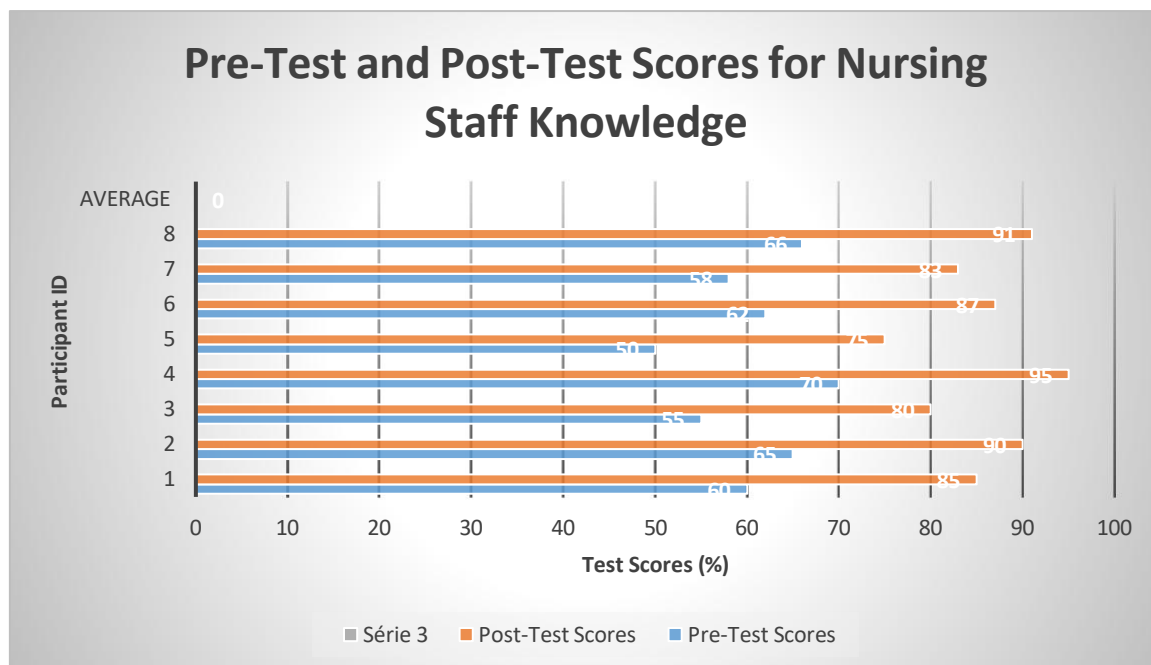
incorporating both formative and summative evaluation approaches, the project ensured that the staff education program was rigorous, evidence-based, and aligned with best practices. This structured evaluation process reinforced the importance of ongoing staff training and professional development in supporting medication adherence among adult ADHD patients.

### **Results**

The implementation of the staff education project yielded positive results in improving nursing staff knowledge about stimulant medication adherence for adults with ADHD. The pre- and posttest assessments showed a marked increase in average scores, indicating that participants gained a stronger understanding of adherence strategies (Jeun et al., 2024). Specifically, pretest score averaged 65 percentage points, while posttest score increased to an average of 90 percentage points, demonstrating an average 25 percentage point increase, suggesting an improvement in knowledge. During the educational sessions, staff actively participated in interactive discussions and case-based scenarios, showcasing their ability to apply learned concepts to real-world situations. Feedback gathered informally from participants highlighted the relevance and practicality of the content. Many staff members reported feeling more confident in addressing barriers to stimulant adherence, such as stigma, forgetfulness, and concerns about side effects.

**Figure 1**

*Pre- and Posttest Scores for Nursing Staff Knowledge*



A total of eight participants completed the educational program. The mean pretest score was 60.75%, while the mean posttest score improved to 86.5%, reflecting a 25.75% overall average increase in the score to evaluate knowledge gained.

The educational program positively impacted the project site by equipping nursing staff with the tools and knowledge needed to better support adult patients with ADHD. The organization is now better positioned to address the practice gap surrounding stimulant adherence, which has the potential to improve patient outcomes and overall satisfaction. One key organizational benefit was the establishment of a structured approach to addressing medication adherence barriers. The incorporation of evidence-based strategies such as motivational interviewing, patient education, and the use of reminders has created a framework that staff can use in their daily practice. Additionally,

the project promoted interprofessional collaboration, as staff members engaged in shared discussions to identify solutions and best practices. The improved knowledge among staff is expected to enhance patient–provider interactions, ultimately fostering stronger therapeutic relationships. These improvements contribute to the organization's broader goal of providing high-quality, patient-centered care.

Several limitations impacted the project's results. First, the small sample size of participants limited the generalizability of the findings. Due to scheduling constraints, not all staff members were able to attend the educational sessions, potentially excluding some voices and perspectives. To address this limitation, the sessions were scheduled over two weeks, but participation was still constrained by conflicting responsibilities. Another limitation was the reliance on self-reported feedback and pre-/post-test assessments as primary data sources. While these tools provided valuable insights, they may not capture the full scope of knowledge application in clinical practice. Long-term follow-up would be needed to evaluate the sustainability of the knowledge gained and its impact on patient adherence rates. Finally, time constraints posed a challenge in delivering the educational program and analyzing results within a tight project timeline. These limitations highlight areas for improvement in future iterations of similar projects.

The importance of this project extends beyond the boundaries of the project site. ADHD is a common mental health condition, and stimulant adherence remains a significant challenge in adult populations worldwide. By addressing barriers to adherence and empowering nursing staff with evidence-based strategies, this project provides a model for other healthcare organizations to follow. The project's educational framework can be adapted and implemented in diverse settings, including outpatient clinics,

telehealth platforms, and community health centers. Additionally, the focus on stigma reduction and patient education aligns with broader efforts to promote equity and inclusion in mental healthcare. This project underscores the role of nursing staff as frontline advocates for medication adherence and patient support. By fostering knowledge in managing ADHD medication adherence, the project contributes to a culture of continuous improvement in mental health care delivery. It also highlights the potential for evidence-based education initiatives to create positive social change by improving patient outcomes and reducing disparities in healthcare access and quality. Finally, the project demonstrated measurable success in enhancing staff knowledge and confidence while addressing an important practice gap. Its impact on the organization and its broader implications for mental health care underscore the value of evidence-based education in advancing nursing practice and patient outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

The implementation of the staff education project at the project site had a significant impact on the organization by addressing the practice gap in supporting stimulant medication adherence for adult ADHD patients. The program enhanced nursing staff knowledge, equipping them with evidence-based strategies to tackle barriers such as stigma, forgetfulness, and side effects. By fostering a structured approach to adherence support, the project may contribute to improving patient outcomes and strengthening the organization's commitment to providing high-quality mental health care. The increase in staff knowledge also has the potential to enhance patient satisfaction and adherence rates, thereby contributing to the organization's goals of excellence in care delivery and patient engagement.

While the project achieved its objectives, further recommendations could enhance its sustainability and broader impact. First, conducting periodic refresher training sessions could help reinforce the knowledge gained and address any emerging barriers to stimulant adherence. Expanding the scope of the educational program to include interprofessional team members, such as social workers and psychologists, may also provide a more comprehensive approach to ADHD management. Additionally, integrating adherence monitoring tools and workflows into the organization's electronic health record (EHR) system could streamline the tracking of patient progress and adherence behaviors. Establishing a mentorship program within the nursing team could further empower staff by allowing experienced nurses to guide their peers in applying adherence strategies effectively. Finally, future projects could evaluate the program's long-term impact by collecting and analyzing data on patient adherence and clinical outcomes over an extended period. Also, this project highlights the critical role that nurses play in supporting medication adherence and patient education, particularly in mental health care (Viscardi et al., 2024). By equipping nurses with evidence-based strategies, the project underscores the importance of ongoing professional development to ensure that nurses remain effective advocates for their patients. The program also demonstrates how nurse-led initiatives can address specific practice gaps, ultimately improving the quality of care and promoting better patient outcomes.

Again, the project has the potential to contribute to positive social change by addressing the stigma associated with ADHD and its treatment. By empowering nursing staff to engage patients with compassion and evidence-based education, the program fosters a culture of inclusivity and support for individuals living with ADHD. Moreover, the

project promotes equity by equipping staff with tools to address barriers to adherence, thereby reducing disparities in mental health care access and outcomes. Additionally, the emphasis on patient-centered care and collaborative goal setting ensures that diverse patient needs and experiences are acknowledged and respected. This inclusive approach has the potential to improve trust and communication between patients and healthcare providers, further enhancing the effectiveness of care delivery.

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## Appendix A: Literature Review Table

EBP Question: Does the evidence support development of a staff education program regarding ADHD stimulant medication adherence in patients with ADHD that increases staff knowledge as compared pre to post education.										
Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
Alexine Nansinla	1	Ahmann, E., & Saviet, M. (2024). Development of a Manualized Coaching Intervention for Adult ADHD	Case study or intervention developmen	Adults with ADHD, unspecified sample size, coaching intervention developed in clinical settings	Coaching intervention for adults with ADHD	The manualized coaching intervention showed potential in improving patients' self-regulation and medication adherence	Self-reported outcomes and adherence rates	Small sample size, self-reporting biases	Level IV, Quality B	This study can inform educational strategies for staff to support medication adherence
Alexine Nansinla	2	Alarachi, A., Merrifield, C., Rowa, K., & McCabe, R. E. (2024). Are We Measuring ADHD or Anxiety?	Cross-sectional study	Adult anxiety disorder patients (n = 250), clinical settings	Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale used to differentiate ADHD from anxiety	Overlapping symptoms with anxiety complicate accurate ADHD diagnosis and may influence medication adherence	Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale (ASRS)	Limited to self-reporting, potential diagnostic misclassification	Level III, Quality B	Highlights the need for thorough assessment when determining medication needs
Alexine Nansinla	3	Alexandra L. Vizgaitis, Summer Bottini, et al. (2023). Self-Reported Adult ADHD Symptoms: Evidence Supporting Cautious Use	Cross-sectional study	ADHD patients seeking diagnosis (n = 300), community settings	Self-reported ADHD symptom assessment	Self-report data requires careful interpretation due to high false positives, affecting medication adherence assessments	ASRS, clinician evaluations	Potential over-reliance on self-report, sample is not generalizable	Level III, Quality B	Use caution when interpreting self-reported adherence to medication guidelines

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Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
Alexine Nansinla	4	Fuermaier, A. B. M., Gontijo-Santos Lima, C., & Tucha, O. (2024). Impairment Assessment in Adult ADHD	Systematic review	Adults with ADHD and related disorders	Evaluation of methods for impairment assessment in adults with ADHD	Highlights that accurate impairment assessment is crucial to ensuring proper medication adherence	Multiple standardized diagnostic scales used across studies	High variability in assessment tools used	Level I, Quality A	Relevant for staff education on the importance of accurate impairment assessment in promoting medication adherence
Alexine Nansinla	5	Biederman, J., DiSalvo, M., Green, A., Woodworth, K. Y., Gilfix, T., Law, C., Gabrieli, J., & Faraone, S. V. (2021). Rates of Switching Stimulants in Medication-Naïve Adults with ADHD	Randomized Control Trial	Adults with ADHD (n = 500), outpatient clinic settings	Examined stimulant switching rates in medication-naïve adults	Found frequent stimulant switching, highlighting challenges in adherence due to side effects or effectiveness	Prescription refill rates, self-reporting adherence	Small sample size, potential recall bias in self-reporting	Level II, Quality B	Insightful for understanding the factors that lead to stimulant switching and its impact on adherence
Alexine Nansinla	6	Biederman, J., Fried, R., DiSalvo, M., Woodworth, K. Y., Biederman, I., Driscoll, H., Noyes, E., Faraone, S. V., & Perlis, R. H. (2020). Further Evidence of Low Adherence to Stimulant Treatment in Adult ADHD	Electronic medical record study	Adults with ADHD, 1000 patient records	Examined timely stimulant prescription renewals	Found low rates of adherence to stimulant medication among adults with ADHD	Prescription renewal data from electronic medical records	Limited to one data source, possible missing data	Level II, Quality B	Can be used to inform staff about adherence trends in stimulant prescriptions for ADHD
Alexine Nansinla	7	Chloe Hutt Vater, Maura DiSalvo, Alyssa Ehrlich, Haley Parker, Hannah O'Connor, Stephen	Cross-sectional study	Adults diagnosed with ADHD, 200 participants in	Analyzed differences in ADHD symptoms and outcomes based	Age at diagnosis affects treatment adherence and	Self-reported ADHD symptoms, medical records,	Self-reporting bias, sample limited to clinical populations	Level III, Quality B	Important for understanding how the timing of diagnosis may influence

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Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
		V. Faraone, & Joseph Biederman. (2024). ADHD in Adults: Does Age at Diagnosis Matter?		clinical settings	on age at diagnosis	outcomes, with younger diagnosis correlating with better medication adherence	adherence rates			adherence to stimulant
Alexine Nansinla	8	Danielsson, K., Arnberg, F. K., & Bondjers, K. (2024). Coping strategies and symptoms of Adjustment Disorder among adults with ADHD during the Covid-19 pandemic	Longitudinal study	Adults with ADHD during COVID-19 pandemic (n=300), conducted online	Investigated coping strategies and adjustment disorder symptoms in adults with ADHD	Identified maladaptive coping strategies as significant predictors of low medication adherence during crises like COVID-19	Self-reported coping strategies and adjustment disorder symptoms	Online self-reporting, generalizability due to unique pandemic conditions	Level II, Quality B	Highlights the need for staff education on supporting patients in developing adaptive coping strategies to maintain medication adherence during crises
Alexine Nansinla	9	Eden Morley, & Aimee Tyrrell. (2023). Exploring Female Students' Experiences of ADHD and Its Impact on Social, Academic, and Psychological Functioning	Qualitative study	Female students with ADHD (n=50), university setting	Examined the social, academic, and psychological impact of ADHD on female students	Identified significant academic challenges and stigma that negatively impact medication adherence among female students	Semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis	Small sample size, qualitative nature limits generalizability	Level IV, Quality B	Relevant for staff education on gender-specific challenges that influence adherence to ADHD medication
Alexine Nansinla	10	Halbe, E., Heger, A. S., Kolf, F., Hüpen, P., Bergmann, M., Harrison, B. J., Davey, C. G.,	Case-control study	Adults with ADHD (n=60), mixed gender in a clinical setting	Examined sex differences in physiological responses related to	Found significant differences in how men and women with	Physiological measures such as heart rate variability,	Small sample size, gender differences may not be generalizable	Level III, Quality B	Important for staff to understand gender differences that

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Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
		Philipsen, A., & Lux, S. (2024). Sex differences in physiological correlates of affectively driven decision-making behavior in adult ADHD			decision-making in ADHD	ADHD respond to emotional decision-making tasks, affecting adherence behaviors	skin conductance			might affect patient adherence to ADHD medication
Alexine Nansinla	11	Jean FAM, Moulin F, Schwartz AN, Castel L, Montagni I, Macalli M, Notredame CE, Côté SM, & Galéra C. (2024). Association between ADHD symptoms and illicit stimulant use following 1 year among French university students of the i-Share cohort	Cohort study	French university students (n=1,000), i-Share cohort	Examined the relationship between ADHD symptoms and illicit stimulant use after one year	Found a significant association between ADHD symptoms and increased risk of illicit stimulant use, impacting long-term medication adherence	Self-reported ADHD symptoms, stimulant use	Self-reporting bias, cultural differences may limit generalizability	Level II, Quality A	Highlights the importance of monitoring and educating staff on the risk of stimulant misuse in ADHD patients to ensure adherence to prescribed medications
Alexine Nansinla	12	Jeun, K. J., Nduaguba, S., & Al-Mamun, M. A. (2024). Factors influencing the medication adherence in adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and its impact on healthcare utilization	Cross-sectional study	Adults with ADHD (n=400), clinical setting	Investigated factors influencing ADHD medication adherence and healthcare utilization	Identified socioeconomic status, education level, and comorbid conditions as major factors influencing medication adherence	Self-reported adherence, healthcare utilization metrics	Self-reporting bias, recall bias	Level III, Quality B	Highlights the importance of addressing socioeconomic barriers and comorbid conditions to improve medication adherence in ADHD patients

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Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
Alexine Nansinla	13	Kaylee Boyd, Maryam Ware, & Yara Mekawi. (2024). Interactive Effects of Racism and Racial Centrality on ADHD Symptoms	Cross-sectional study	African American adults with ADHD (n=200), community-based setting	Examined how experiences of racism and racial identity (centrality) interact to influence ADHD symptoms	Found that higher levels of racism and stronger racial centrality were associated with more severe ADHD symptoms, impacting medication adherence	Self-reported experiences of racism, ADHD symptom scales	Limited to African American population, cross-sectional design	Level III, Quality B	Important for understanding cultural factors influencing ADHD symptom severity and adherence in minority populations
Alexine Nansinla	14	Kuo, H.-I., Nitsche, M. A., Wu, Y.-T., Chang, J.-C., & Yang, L.-K. (2024). Acute aerobic exercise modulates cognition and cortical excitability in adults with ADHD and healthy controls	Randomized controlled trial	Adults with ADHD and healthy controls (n=60), clinical setting	Investigated the effects of acute aerobic exercise on cognition and cortical excitability in adults with ADHD	Found that aerobic exercise improved cognitive function and modulated cortical excitability in ADHD patients, potentially aiding in adherence	Cognitive tests, cortical excitability measures (EEG)	Small sample size, short-term intervention	Level II, Quality A	Suggests exercise as a potential adjunct to improve cognitive function and adherence in ADHD patients
Alexine Nansinla	15	Nauman, M., Hahn, C., Nketiah, E., Ahmad, S., & Karmali, R. (2021). Adderall Induced Dilated Cardiomyopathy in an Adult Male with ADHD	Case study	1 adult male with ADHD, hospital setting	Described a case of Adderall-induced dilated cardiomyopathy in an adult male	Highlighted the rare but serious cardiovascular risks associated with stimulant use, affecting long-term adherence decisions	Clinical observations, cardiac imaging	Single case study, no control group	Level V, Quality C	Raises awareness of potential cardiovascular risks in stimulant use for ADHD, important for educating patients on

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Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
										medication safety
Alexine Nansinla	16	Price, M. Z., & Price, R. L. (2023). Generic stimulant shortage update: From bad to worse	Editorial	National level, no specific population size	Discusses the impact of the national shortage of generic stimulant medications	Highlights the worsening shortage of ADHD stimulant medications, impacting patient adherence and treatment outcomes	Commentary, market analysis	Not an empirical study, limited to anecdotal and market observations	Level V, Quality C	Raises awareness of external factors (supply chain issues) affecting adherence to ADHD medications, important for policy and advocacy discussions
Alexine Nansinla	17	Spalding, W., Farahbakhshian, S., Maculaitis, M. C., Peck, E. Y., & Goren, A. (2022). The association of oral stimulant medication adherence with work productivity among adults with ADHD	Cohort study	Adults with ADHD (n=500), workplace setting	Investigated the relationship between stimulant medication adherence and work productivity in adults with ADHD	Found that higher adherence rates were significantly associated with improved work productivity and reduced absenteeism	Medication adherence rates, work productivity metrics	Self-reported adherence and productivity, potential reporting bias	Level II, Quality B	Highlights the direct benefits of medication adherence on functional outcomes like work productivity, emphasizing the importance of adherence in adult ADHD treatment
Alexine Nansinla	18	Thurn, D., Riedner, A., & Wolstein, J. (2020). Use Motives of Patients with Amphetamine-Type Stimulants Use	Cross-sectional study	Adults with ADHD and stimulant use disorder (n=150), clinical setting	Explored the motives behind amphetamine-type stimulant use among patients with	Found that motives included enhancing focus, energy, and mood,	Structured interviews, motive assessment scales	Self-reporting bias, small sample size	Level III, Quality B	Important for understanding the dual challenges of ADHD treatment and

EBP Question: Does the evidence support development of a staff education program regarding ADHD stimulant medication adherence in patients with ADHD that increases staff knowledge as compared pre to post education.										
Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
		Disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder			ADHD and stimulant use disorder	with some patients using stimulants for non-medical reasons, complicating adherence				substance use, and how non-medical stimulant use may interfere with adherence
Alexine Nansinla	19	Khan, M. U., & Aslani, P. (2021). Exploring factors influencing initiation, implementation, and discontinuation of medications in adults with ADHD	Qualitative study	Adults with ADHD (n=50), community-based setting	Explored factors influencing each stage of medication use: initiation, implementation, and discontinuation	Found that support systems, stigma, and personal beliefs about medication played significant roles in adherence	Semi-structured interviews, thematic analysis	Small sample size, limited generalizability	Level IV, Quality B	Provides insight into personal and social factors influencing ADHD medication adherence at different stages of treatment
Alexine Nansinla	20	Viscardi, L. H., Rosa, V., Vilanova, F., Grevet, E. H., Dotto-Bau, C. H., Rodrigues-Lobato, M. I., Cavalcante-Passos, I., & Costa, A. B. (2024). <i>The association between personal stigma and adherence to treatment in patients diagnosed with bipolar mood disorder, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and schizophrenia.</i>	Non-experimental, cross-sectional study	Patients diagnosed with bipolar disorder, ADHD, and schizophrenia; specific setting not provided.	Examined the effect of personal stigma on adherence to treatment among individuals with major mental health diagnoses.	Identified that personal stigma significantly impacts medication adherence, with increased stigma leading to reduced adherence rates, particularly among ADHD and schizophrenia populations. Suggests	Standardized self-report adherence scales and stigma assessments	Limited by reliance on self-reported measures and potential selection bias, as participants with high stigma may avoid participation.	Level III; Good	Stigma's influence on adherence highlights a potential area for intervention, particularly in ADHD. This study underscores the need for stigma reduction strategies in clinical practice.

EBP Question: Does the evidence support development of a staff education program regarding ADHD stimulant medication adherence in patients with ADHD that increases staff knowledge as compared pre to post education.										
Reviewer name(s)	Article number	Author, date, and title	Type of evidence	Population, size, and setting	Intervention	Findings that help answer the EBP question	Measures used	Limitations	Evidence level and quality	Notes to team
		Revista de Psicopatología y Psicología Clínica, 29(1), 71–81.				stigma reduction interventions could improve adherence.				

*Note.* This table summarizes key studies used in the project, including their level of evidence, main findings, and relevance to the staff education program.

## Appendix B: Evidence Synthesis Table

EBP Question: Does the evidence Support development of a staff education program regarding ADHD stimulant medication adherence in Patients with ADHD that increases staff Knowledge as compared pre to post education?			
Strength		Number of Sources (Quantity)	Synthesized Findings With Article Number(s)  (This is <i>not</i> a simple restating of information from each individual evidence summary—see directions)
Level	Overall Quality Rating  (Strong, good, or low)		
<b>Level I</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Experimental studies</li> </ul>	Strong	3	Experimental studies indicate benefits of early intervention to reduce stimulant switching and support adherence. Adherence to stimulant medication correlates with increased productivity and reduced symptom severity (Biederman et al., 2021; Biederman et al., 2020, Spalding et al., 2022) (Article 5,6,17).
<b>Level II</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quasi-experimental studies</li> </ul>	Good	4	Quasi-experimental studies demonstrate that exercise and structured coaching interventions improve cognitive function and medication adherence in ADHD populations (Ahmann & Saviet, 2024; Halbe et al., 2024; Jean et al., 2024; Kuo et al., 2024). (Article 1,10,11,14).

<p><b>Level III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nonexperimental, including qualitative studies</li> </ul>	<p>Good</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Non-experimental findings support the importance of distinguishing ADHD from anxiety and other comorbidities to ensure accurate treatment. These studies highlight the role of coping strategies, self-reported symptom management, and the importance of demographic factors like age and stigma in treatment adherence (Alarachi et al., 2024; Fuermaier et al., 2024; Jeun et al., 2024; Boyd et al., 2024; Viscardi et al., 2024; Danielsson et al., 2024; Vizgaitis et al., 2023; Morley &amp; Tyrell, 2023) (Articles 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 20,).</p>
<p><b>Level IV</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clinical practice guidelines or consensus panels</li> </ul>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>No clinical practice guidelines specific to this question were included in this set.</p>
<p><b>Level V</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Literature reviews, QI, case reports, expert opinion</li> </ul>	<p>Low</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>Expert reviews emphasize that consistent medication management and manualized coaching may improve symptom control but not limitations due to generic stimulant shortages and patient demographics (Thurn et al., 2020; Price &amp; Price, 2023; Khan &amp; Aslani, 2021; Nauman et al., 2021; Hutt Vater et al., 2024) (Articles 7, 15, 16, 18, 19).</p>

**Where does the evidence show consistency?**

Evidence consistently supports individualized interventions and assessments that consider the unique aspects of ADHD and co-occurring conditions. Experimental and quasi-experimental studies, such as those by Ahmann and Saviet (2024), emphasize structured coaching, aerobic exercise (Kuo et al., 2024), and tailored assessments as beneficial for both cognitive performance and adherence. Non-experimental studies support the importance of accurate diagnosis, particularly in distinguishing ADHD from anxiety, to avoid under- or over-treatment (Alarachi et al., 2024; Fuermaier et al., 2024). Additionally, adherence to stimulant prescriptions is consistently associated with better productivity and reduced symptom severity (Biederman et al., 2021; Spalding et al., 2022).

**Where does the evidence show inconsistency?**

Variation appears in the success of certain interventions based on patient demographics, symptom severity, and the presence of comorbidities. Studies by Viscardi et al. (2024) and Boyd et al. (2024) reveal that factors such as stigma and racial identity can impact adherence and symptom reporting, showing inconsistencies in adherence rates across demographic groups. The self-reporting of symptoms, as noted by Vizgaitis et al. (2023), may also affect consistency, particularly among patients with high anxiety or depression levels.

**Best evidence recommendations (taking into consideration the quantity, consistency, and strength of the evidence):**

Synthesized findings suggest that structured interventions, including manualized coaching, symptom tracking, and routine stimulant prescription reviews, should be implemented as best practices.

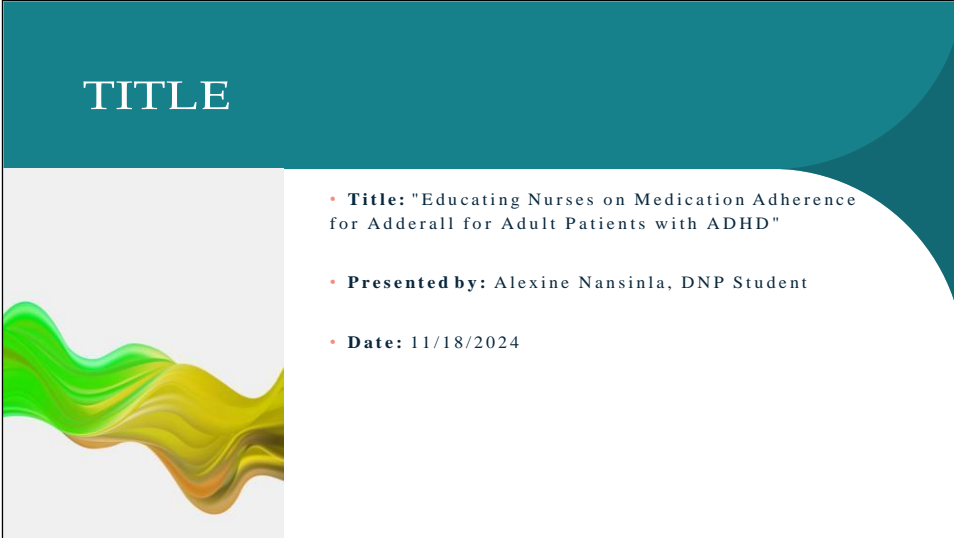
Regular assessment and tailored coaching interventions such as those that involve aerobic exercise and specific coping strategies are recommended to support cognitive outcomes and adherence among adult patients.

<p>Considerations should also be made to address potential stigma and demographic factors influencing adherence, as noted by studies involving minority populations.</p> <p>Organizations should prioritize the implementation of structured ADHD awareness training programs for staff, as evidence supports significant improvements in knowledge and support capabilities.</p> <p>Continuous education and refreshers on ADHD should be mandated to maintain awareness and knowledge among staff, addressing evolving understanding and treatment practices.</p> <p>Regular evaluation of training effectiveness should be conducted to adapt and improve educational interventions based on staff feedback and changing needs.</p>
<p><b>Based on your synthesis, select the statement that best describes the overall characteristics of the body of evidence.</b></p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Strong &amp; compelling evidence, consistent results</b>-Recommendations are reliable; evaluate for organizational translation.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Good evidence &amp; consistent results</b>-Recommendations may be reliable; evaluate for risk and organizational translation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Good evidence but conflicting results</b>-Unable to establish best practice based on current evidence; evaluate risk, consider further investigation for new evidence, develop a research study, or discontinue the project.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Little or no evidence</b>-Unable to establish best practice based on current evidence; consider further investigation for new evidence, develop a research study, or discontinue the project.</p>

*Note.* This table organizes the main themes from the literature, summarizing how they support the staff education program.

## Appendix C: Educational Program PowerPoint

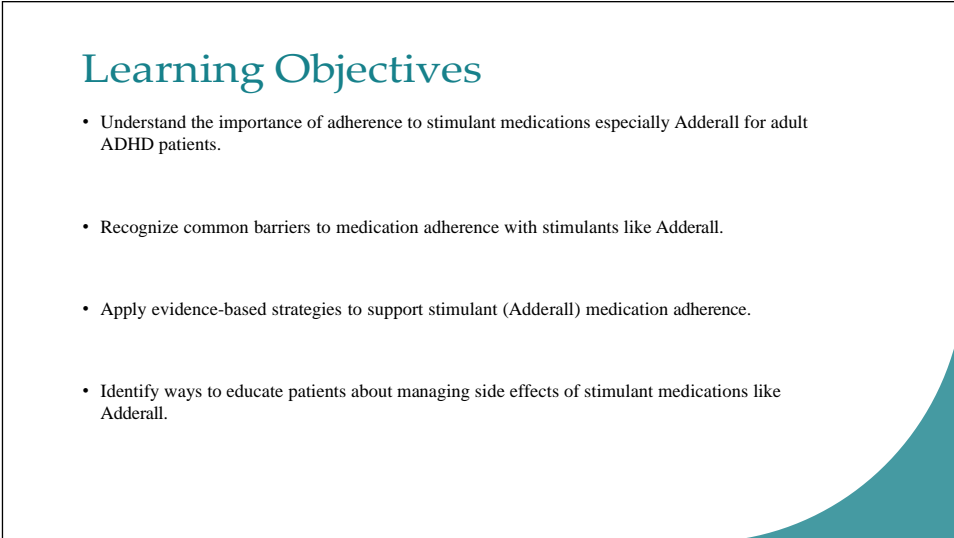
Slide 1



**TITLE**

- **Title:** "Educating Nurses on Medication Adherence for Adderall for Adult Patients with ADHD"
- **Presented by:** Alexine Nansinla, DNP Student
- **Date:** 11/18/2024

Slide 2



### Learning Objectives

- Understand the importance of adherence to stimulant medications especially Adderall for adult ADHD patients.
- Recognize common barriers to medication adherence with stimulants like Adderall.
- Apply evidence-based strategies to support stimulant (Adderall) medication adherence.
- Identify ways to educate patients about managing side effects of stimulant medications like Adderall.

## Slide 3

## Background on ADHD and Stimulant Medications

### ➤ ADHD in Adults: Key Characteristics and Symptoms

- ADHD in adults can present as inattention, impulsivity, and hyperactivity, though these symptoms often appear differently than in children.
- Common signs include difficulty staying focused, managing time, organizing tasks, and controlling impulses, which can interfere with work, relationships, and daily responsibilities.

### ➤ Stimulant Medications: Role of Adderall and Other Stimulants

- Stimulants like Adderall are among the most effective medications for managing ADHD. They help balance chemicals in the brain that support focus, impulse control, and motivation.
- Adderall and similar medications increase dopamine levels in the brain, which can improve attention, reduce impulsivity, and promote a more balanced mood.

### ➤ Importance of Adherence: Benefits of Adherence for Symptom Management and Quality of Life

- Adherence to prescribed stimulant medications is essential for achieving consistent symptom relief.
- Regular medication use helps stabilize attention, control impulses, and enhances productivity, thereby improving the overall quality of life and reducing the risk of negative outcomes related to untreated ADHD, such as job instability and interpersonal conflicts.

## Slide 4

## Common Barriers to Stimulant Adherence

• **Side Effects:** Many patients experience side effects such as appetite suppression, sleep disturbances, and headaches. These effects can be uncomfortable and may deter patients from consistently taking their medication as prescribed. Educating patients on ways to manage or mitigate side effects, like adjusting meal timing or monitoring sleep patterns, can help improve adherence.

• **Stigma and Misunderstanding:** There is often stigma associated with ADHD and the use of stimulant medications. Some patients may fear judgment or misunderstanding from others, or they may hold misconceptions about stimulants leading to addiction (Viscardi et al., 2024). This stigma and lack of understanding can cause reluctance to adhere to their prescribed treatment.

• **Lifestyle Factors:** ADHD symptoms themselves, such as forgetfulness or disorganization, can lead to missed doses or inconsistent medication use. Additionally, patients with irregular routines or high-stress lives may find it challenging to establish a consistent medication schedule. Tools like daily alarms or reminders may help patients overcome these barriers.

• **Healthcare-Related Issues:** Limited support or infrequent communication with healthcare providers can also be a barrier. Patients may not feel comfortable reporting issues or discussing challenges with adherence, which can lead to unaddressed concerns. Routine check-ins and open, non-judgmental conversations can help build a supportive environment for adherence.

## Slide 5

## Evidence-Based Strategies for Improving Adherence

### ➤ Setting Medication Reminders

- Using tools like phone alarms, pill reminder apps, or even calendar notifications can help patients remember to take their medication on time.
- Visual reminders like pillboxes organized by day can also support adherence, especially for those who may forget or get distracted during the day.

### ➤ Addressing Side Effects

- Encourage strategies like staying hydrated, eating small meals or snacks with doses to mitigate appetite suppression, and adjusting the timing of doses to reduce sleep disturbances.
- Nurses can also provide information on when to contact a healthcare provider if side effects persist, ensuring patients feel supported in managing these issues.

### ➤ Counseling on Addiction Myths

- Educate patients on the low risk of addiction when stimulant medications are used as prescribed. Explain the difference between therapeutic use for ADHD and misuse or abuse.
- Nurses can address common myths, such as concerns over "dependence," to build patient trust and reduce fears about taking their medication.

### ➤ Collaborative Goal Setting

- Work together with patients to set realistic, individualized goals for medication adherence, considering their lifestyle and specific challenges (Jeun, Nduaguba, & Al-Mamun, 2024).
- Regular check-ins can help adjust these goals as needed, allowing patients to take an active role in their treatment plan and encouraging long-term adherence.

## Slide 6

## Evaluation and Monitoring Adherence

### ➤ Regular Check-Ins

- Scheduling consistent follow-up appointments to discuss adherence can help keep patients accountable and provide an opportunity to address any new challenges.
- These check-ins allow nurses to monitor progress, adjust recommendations, and reinforce the importance of medication adherence for symptom control and quality of life (Biederman et al., 2020).

### ➤ Questionnaires

- Using validated tools like the Medication Adherence Rating Scale (MARS) or Adherence to Refills and Medication Scale (ARMS) can objectively assess adherence levels.
- These questionnaires are quick and reliable ways to identify patterns in adherence behavior and can reveal barriers patients may not readily discuss.

### ➤ Patient Self-Reports

- Encouraging patients to share openly about their medication-taking behaviors, including times they might have missed doses, promotes trust and transparency.
- Self-reports help nurses gain a realistic understanding of adherence patterns and create a supportive environment where patients feel comfortable discussing their challenges (Alarachi, Merrifield, Rowa, & McCabe, 2024).

### ➤ Feedback and Adaptation

- Based on feedback gathered from check-ins, questionnaires, and self-reports, nurses can adjust adherence strategies to better fit the patient's lifestyle or address specific issues.
- This process allows for continuous improvement in adherence support, ensuring strategies remain effective and relevant to the patient's changing needs.

## Slide 7

## Summary and Key Takeaways

- **Summary:** This presentation focused on the importance of medication adherence for adults with ADHD, specifically for stimulant medications like Adderall. It highlighted strategies nurses can use to improve adherence, such as setting medication reminders, addressing side effects, and educating patients about addiction myths. The presentation emphasized the need for personalized approaches, open communication, and collaborative goal-setting to help patients manage their treatment effectively. Nurses are encouraged to apply these strategies in daily practice to improve patient outcomes and quality of life. Monitoring adherence through follow-ups and assessment tools is also vital for ongoing support.
- **Key Takeaways:** Importance of adherence, managing side effects, supporting patient understanding, and practical strategies.
- **Next Steps:** Encourage nurses to implement these strategies in their daily practice. Applying these tools can build stronger patient-provider relationships, foster adherence, and ultimately lead to better health outcomes for adults with ADHD.

## Slide 8

## Questions and Discussion

- **Prompt:** Open the floor for questions and discussion.
- **Encourage:** Sharing of experiences, thoughts on implementation, and feedback.

## Slide 9

## References

- Alarachi, A., Merrifield, C., Rowa, K., & McCabe, R. E. (2024). Are We Measuring ADHD or Anxiety? Examining the Factor Structure and Discriminant Validity of the Adult ADHD Self-Report Scale in an Adult Anxiety Disorder Population. *Assessment, 31*(7), 1508–1524. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10731911231225190>
- Biederman J, Fried R, DiSalvo M, Woodworth KY, Biederman I, Driscoll H, Noyes E, Faraone SV, & Perlis RH. (2020). Further evidence of low adherence to stimulant treatment in adult ADHD: an electronic medical record study examining timely renewal of a stimulant prescription. *Psychopharmacology, 237*(9), 2835–2843. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00213-020-05576-y>
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**Appendix D: Pre- and Posttest Questionnaires****KNOWLEDGE ASSESSMENT FOR STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE  
MEDICATION ADHERENCE IN ADHD**

ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Pretest \_\_\_\_\_

Posttest \_\_\_\_\_

**1. A 34-year-old patient with ADHD mentions missing doses of Adderall due to feeling overwhelmed by the daily routine. What is the best approach for the nurse to improve adherence?**

- a) Suggest the patient try setting an alarm reminder for the medication.
- b) Recommend taking the medication only when feeling overwhelmed.
- c) Tell the patient to skip the dose if they forget it.
- d) Advise switching to a different ADHD medication.

**2. A patient reports feeling jittery and anxious after taking their Adderall dose. What would be an effective response to address this and support adherence?**

- a) Advise the patient to take half the dose without consulting a provider.
- b) Encourage the patient to stop the medication immediately.
- c) Suggest discussing with the prescriber the possibility of adjusting the dose or timing.
- d) Tell the patient these side effects are typical, and they should continue as prescribed.

**3. A patient with a history of ADHD tells you they're worried about becoming addicted to Adderall. What's the best way to address their concern?**

- a) Reassure the patient that addiction is not a risk and move on.
- b) Explain that dependence and addiction are unlikely when used as prescribed and offer to discuss their concerns further.
- c) Advise the patient to take breaks from the medication to avoid addiction.
- d) Suggest that the patient seeks counseling for addiction concerns.

**4. During a follow-up, a patient states they don't notice any improvement in their ADHD symptoms on Adderall. What should the nurse do to promote adherence and support symptom management?**

- a) Encourage the patient to increase the dose on their own.
- b) Advise the patient to immediately stop taking the medication.
- c) Suggest the patient discuss their experience with the prescriber to explore dose adjustment or alternative treatments.
- d) Tell the patient it can take months to feel any improvement.

**5. A patient complains of experiencing dry mouth since starting Adderall. Which advice could the nurse give to address this side effect and promote adherence?**

- a) Stop the medication and seek a new prescription.
- b) Ignore the side effects, as it will likely go away over time.
- c) Suggest drinking more water and chewing sugar-free gum to alleviate the dryness.
- d) Double the dose to build tolerance faster.

**6. A patient taking Adderall is concerned about its impact on sleep. How can the nurse help support adherence while addressing this issue?**

- a) Advise the patient to take the medication right before bed.
- b) Recommend discussing an earlier dosing schedule with the prescriber to minimize sleep interference.
- c) Suggest the patient skip doses on days they need better sleep.
- d) Tell the patient to increase their caffeine intake in the morning.

**7. A 29-year-old patient says they sometimes double their Adderall dose on days when they need more focus. What is the most appropriate response?**

- a) Advise that taking extra doses as needed is acceptable.
- b) Warn them about the risks of misuse and encourage adherence to the prescribed dose.
- c) Suggest taking a dose every few hours instead.
- d) Tell them to skip the medication on non-focus days to make up for the extra doses.

**8. A patient mentions they occasionally share their Adderall with a friend who has trouble concentrating. How should the nurse respond?**

- a) Reassure the patient it's fine to help out a friend.
- b) Educate the patient on the risks of medication sharing, including legal and health implications.
- c) Suggest that the friend speak to a doctor if they have trouble concentrating.
- d) Advise the patient to increase their prescription to accommodate this sharing.

**9. A patient is concerned about Adderall's impact on their appetite and has been skipping doses. How can the nurse address this to promote adherence?**

- a) Recommend eating a large meal immediately after taking the medication.
- b) Advise taking the medication only every other day.
- c) Discuss the side effects and suggest strategies like scheduling meals and discussing with the prescriber any possible dosage adjustments.
- d) Encourage the patient to eat more snacks throughout the day without adjusting the medication.

**10. A patient who recently started Adderall expresses frustration with occasional headaches. What advice should the nurse give to help manage this side effect and support adherence?**

- a) Encourage the patient to stop the medication until the headaches go away.
- b) Suggest hydration, regular eating schedules, and, if needed, mild over-the-counter pain relief, while monitoring symptoms.
- c) Advise increasing the dose to build tolerance.
- d) Reassure the patient that the side effects will resolve on their own.