

ABSTRACT

Introduction & objective

Medication adherence plays a key role in the effective management of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), especially in settings with limited resources. Although Sri Lanka provides free healthcare services, maintaining consistent adherence to long-term medication remains a challenge. This study was conducted to assess the level of medication adherence and to identify factors associated with adherence among patients attending medical clinics in Type A Divisional Hospitals in the RDHS area of Kalutara.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study with an analytical component was carried out among 427 adult patients with chronic diseases. Data were collected using a pre-tested structured questionnaire, which included the validated 8-item Morisky Medication Adherence Scale (MMAS-8). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data, while Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests were applied to assess associations between selected variables and medication adherence.

Results

The findings showed that only 10.3% of participants had good medication adherence (95% CI: 7.4%–13.2%), while the majority (89.7%) had poor adherence. The most commonly reported barriers were forgetfulness (36.1%) and concerns about side effects (16.1%). Socio-demographic, socioeconomic, and clinical characteristics were not significantly associated with adherence. However, patient-related factors such as health literacy, beliefs about the necessity and benefits of medication, perceived severity of the illness, and concerns about side effects showed significant associations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, medication adherence in this setting is low and appears to be largely influenced by patient-related factors. Strengthening patient education and counseling may help improve adherence and overall disease outcomes.

Keywords:

Medication adherence, non-communicable diseases, Health beliefs, Sri Lanka