Abstract

One of the major problems in psychopharmacology of patients with schizophrenia is non-adherence, which is the most important risk factor for relapse and re-hospitalization. This study was ***conducted to*** assess schizophrenic patients' adherence to their prescribed antipsychotic medications and identify factors that may affect their adherence. ***The sample*** consisted of 100 schizophrenic patients, who attended the follow up at the Outpatient Clinic at the Psychiatric and Mental Health Hospital in Benha city. ***A descriptive design*** was utilized; ***three tools were used for data collection***: **The first tool** is a structured interview schedule sheet that was used to assess schizophrenic patients' adherence and identify factors that might affect it. **The second tool** is Drug attitude inventory scale (DAI). It was used to assess the patients' attitude toward antipsychotic drugs. **The third tool** is Advanced Warning of Relapse (The AWARE Questionnaire). It was used as a measure of the warning signs of psychotic relapse. ***The results of the present study revealed that***, non-adherence was reported in 53.0% of the studied subjects. The present study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the patients' adherence and their attitude toward antipsychotic drugs. Nearly two thirds of the studied subjects (65.0%) had a relapse and it was found that there was a statistically significant difference between the patients' adherence and relapse. There was no statistical significant difference between all characteristics of the subjects and their adherence to medications except age, residence, schizophrenia subtypes, their caregivers' age medication knowledge and side effects. ***According to these results the researcher recommended that***, develop and implement educational programs for patients to improve insight, attitudes toward medications and knowledge about their medication and increasing their awareness about causes, signs of relapse and the importance of adherence in preventing relapse using a large sample of schizophrenics.

Keywords: schizophrenia, non-adherence, relapse.