

# Caregiver Role in Adherence in Oral Oncology Care Coordination

Patients may face multiple barriers to be adherent with oral oncology therapies. Examples of barriers include<sup>1-4</sup>:

## Physical deficits:

Visual, physical, cognitive, mental illness comorbidities, history of poor medication adherence, and treatment of asymptomatic disease

## Social support gaps:

Lack of social or family support, financial limitations, and patient anticipation of adverse events

## Therapeutic concerns:

Toxicity, adverse effects, complex regimens, increased dosing frequency, as well as food and drug interactions

## Educational needs:

Poor understanding of the benefits of long-term therapy and the consequences of poor adherence

## Health care system failures:

Weak doctor-patient relationship and poor communication, limited access to convenient and affordable care, as well as variation in insurance coverage, including:

- Functionally uninsured: Insurance does not cover a medication
- Underinsured: Insurance covers a medication with a high cost-share
- Uninsured: No insurance to help cover the cost of a medication

Caregivers can support cancer treatment patients in the home, doctor's office, or hospital by filling in social support gaps.<sup>5</sup>

Tasks can range from helping organizing medications to researching insurance benefits.

Tools such as a patient health care binder may be helpful for caregivers. Useful information for this tool may include:



As caregivers strive to offer compassionate and efficient support to the patient, they may need some support themselves.

The Caregiver Action Network offers some tips on how caregivers can care for themselves<sup>6</sup>:



Seek support from other caregivers



Take care of their own health



Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help



Take respite breaks often



Watch for signs of depression and get professional help if needed

## Key Takeaway

- Patient adherence is dependent upon many factors. Caregivers can support patients through a variety of activities, filling important social gaps

## References

1. Oncology Nursing Society. Oral adherence toolkit. Published 2016. Accessed July 8, 2021. [https://www.ons.org/sites/default/files/ONS\\_Toolkit\\_ONLINE.pdf](https://www.ons.org/sites/default/files/ONS_Toolkit_ONLINE.pdf)
2. US Pharmacist. Challenges to oral chemotherapy adherence. Published June 18, 2019. Accessed April 24, 2020. <https://www.uspharmacist.com/article/challenges-to-oral-chemotherapy-adherence>
3. Greer JA, Amoyal N, Nisotel L, et al. A systematic review of adherence to oral antineoplastic therapies. *Oncologist*. 2016;21(3):354-376.
4. Schneider SM, Hess K, Gosselin, T. Interventions to promote adherence with oral agents. *Semin Oncol Nurs*. 2011;27(2):133-141.
5. UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center website. University of California, San Francisco, Caregivers Project/Osher Center for Integrative Medicine. Orientation to caregiving – a handbook for family caregivers of patients with brain tumors. [http://cancer.ucsf.edu/\\_docs/crc/Caregiver\\_GEN.pdf](http://cancer.ucsf.edu/_docs/crc/Caregiver_GEN.pdf). Published 2013. Accessed September 10, 2020.
6. Caregiver Action Network. 10 tips for family caregivers. <https://caregiveraction.org/resources/10-tips-family-caregivers>. Accessed September 15, 2020.

