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"Enhancing self care"

# EXPLORING REASONS FOR NON ADHERENCE WITH CLOZAPINE TREATMENT IN PEOPLE WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA

## Background

Between 15%-25% of the 200,000 people diagnosed with schizophrenia in the UK may not benefit from first line anti psychotic medication. They are at greatest risk of relapse and admission to psychiatric hospitals. Recent guidance recommends treatment with clozapine for these patients. However, a significant proportion never starts treatment or stops it early.



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*"Non compliance with treatment places people with schizophrenia at increased risk of relapse and admission to hospital. This study explored the reasons behind this and can be used to improve ways in which people use and adhere to their treatment."*

## Aims and methods

This study explored the reasons for non adherence with clozapine treatment. Previous research has found that 42% of patients discontinued clozapine treatment over a seven year period. This study is based on in depth interviews with 32 people with schizophrenia who had been prescribed clozapine and 15 carers.

## Key findings

- Participants' views on the causes and nature of schizophrenia were found to be less important than their individual experiences and their interpretation of those experiences.
- Changes in these experiences are the central problem in participants' lives.
- The reasons for and consequences of taking medication are assessed against several categories of experience in the decision making process.
- Even minor improvements in symptoms, abilities or life experiences can be valued highly by people with schizophrenia.
- Standardised assessments used in clinical practice fail to give sufficient weight to the perceived importance of these minor improvements.

## Conclusion:

The evidence from this study can be used to help improve ways in which people use and adhere to their treatment. This applies to anti-psychotic medication generally and clozapine specifically.



**Further information: The full report is available on request**

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