

ADHERENCE SURVEY – KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

Survey Overview/Methodology:

Prescription Solutions, one of the nation’s largest pharmacy benefits management (PBM) companies and a business unit of UnitedHealth Group and the National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) commissioned a study to gain insight into what consumers think, believe and do when it comes to taking their prescription medications as instructed.

The national telephone poll was conducted by Opinion Research Corp. on behalf of Prescription Solutions from October 22-25, 2009. The national probability sample included 1,000 adults (500 men and 500 women), 18 years of age and older, and living in private households in the continental United States. Margin of error was +/-3 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

Key Findings:

1. When **all respondents** were asked how many prescription medicines they take on a weekly basis:
 - 54 percent take a prescription medicine on a weekly basis
 - 41 percent say they take 1-4 prescription medicines weekly
 - 13 percent say they take five or more prescription medicines weekly
 - 45 percent do not a prescription medicine on a weekly basis
 - 2 percent didn’t know/weren’t sure

2. When **all respondents** were asked how closely they follow the instructions provided by their doctor and written on the medicine container when it comes to taking prescription medicines:
 - 95 percent say they closely follow these instructions
 - 83 percent say “very closely”
 - 12 percent say “somewhat closely”
 - 4 percent say not closely
 - 2 percent say “not very closely”
 - 1 percent say “not at all closely”
 - 1 percent didn’t know/weren’t sure

- 3. When all respondents were asked if they have ever consistently done any of the following:**
- 54 percent said they consistently did one or more of the following:
 - 37 percent say they didn't finish taking all of the prescription medicine as instructed
 - 31 percent say they have skipped doses
 - 23 percent say they didn't refill the prescription medicine as instructed
 - 8 percent say they took more doses than was instructed or "doubled up" on doses
 - 45 percent say they have not consistently done any of these things
 - 1 percent didn't know/weren't sure
- 4. Of those respondents who did not adhere to their prescription medicines consistently, when asked for the reasons they did not follow their doctor's instructions:**
- 59 percent say that they started to feel better and didn't think it was necessary to keep taking the prescription medicine
 - 37 percent say that they were concerned about side effects
 - 25 percent say that they weren't feeling any better so they didn't think it was necessary to keep taking the prescription medicine
 - 24 percent say that their prescription medicine was too expensive
 - 8 percent say that they didn't know why they were taking the prescription in the first place
 - 7 percent say they didn't understand the instructions for the prescription medicine
 - 19 percent didn't know/weren't sure
- 5. Of those respondents who consistently did not adhere to their prescription medicines, when asked if they believe that they may have experienced poorer health as a result of not taking their prescription medicine as instructed:**
- 84 percent say "no"
 - 15 percent say "yes"
 - 1 percent didn't know/weren't sure
- 6. Of those respondents who consistently did not adhere to their prescription medicines, when asked which of the following would help them take their prescription medicines as instructed:**
- 49 percent say a lower cost for prescription medicines
 - 48 percent say if their doctor prescribed them a different prescription medicine with fewer side effects
 - 39 percent say refill reminders
 - 34 percent say easier to understand instructions
 - 25 percent say someone regularly checking in with them on whether they are taking their prescription medicine as instructed
 - 16 percent say that they feel they are the best judge for deciding if they need to continue taking their prescription medicines
 - 9 percent didn't know/weren't sure

7. When all respondents were asked what they did when they have experienced a side effect while taking a prescription medicine :

- 65 percent say they discussed the side effect with their doctor or pharmacist
 - Women are more likely to discuss a side effect with their doctor (72 percent v. 57 percent)
- 46 percent say they stopped taking the prescription medicine
- 39 percent say they continued taking the prescription medicine
- 21 percent say they changed the dose or frequency of the prescription medicine
- 19 percent say they have never experienced a side effect when taking a prescription medicine
- 1 percent didn't know/weren't sure

8. When all respondents were asked which of the following best describes their feelings toward prescription medicine :

- 87 percent say they contribute greatly **or** somewhat to improving my health
 - 49 percent say they contribute greatly to improving my health
 - 38 percent say they contribute somewhat to improving my health
- 9 percent say they contribute little to improving my health
- 3 percent say they contribute nothing to improving my health
- 1 percent didn't know/weren't sure

9. When all respondents were asked which best describes what they do with the instructions that come with prescription medicines:

- 73 percent say they read both the label and the insert
 - More women than men read both the label and the insert (82 percent v. 63 percent)
- 22 percent say they only read the label on the prescription medicine container
 - More men than women read only the container (30 percent v. 15 percent)
- 2 percent say they only read the insert inside the container or packaging
- 2 percent don't read either the label or the insert

10. When all respondents were asked about what they do when they have questions about prescription medicines:

- 79 percent say they ask their doctor
- 75 percent say they refer to the written information they received along with the medicine
- 71 percent say they ask their pharmacy or pharmacist
- 50 percent say they check the Internet or 'read up'
- 29 percent say they ask their friends and family for their opinions
- 24 percent say they call the pharmacy number on the back of their insurance card
- 1 percent didn't know/weren't sure

11. When all respondents were asked whether the following statements were true /false :

- 90 percent say that it is true that taking my prescription medicines as instructed can help me maintain or improve my health
- 57 percent say that it is true that when people take their prescription medicines as instructed, it can help lower costs to the health care system
- 51 percent that it is true that they keep an updated or current list of all the prescription medicines and over-the-counter medicines they are currently taking
- 40 percent say that it is true that they could do better at taking their prescription medicines as instructed if they were provided educational materials about how to take them
- 30 percent say that it is true that they could do better at taking prescription medicines as instructed if someone were to follow up or encourage me along the way

12. When all respondents were asked when a doctor gives them a new prescription medicine, which of the following happens on a regular basis:

- 83 percent say the doctor asks them if they are taking any other prescription medicines or over-the-counter medicines
- 81 percent say they tell the doctor the names of any other prescription medicines or over-the-counter medicines they are taking
- 36 percent say that their pharmacist asks them if they are taking other prescription medicines or over-the-counter medicines
- 6 percent say none of the above

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