

Title: Why Patients Stop Taking Medication?

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Objective: To investigate reasons for medication discontinuation at different point of prescription therapy as a basis to develop effective patient adherence programs. **Method:** Participants: A total of 6,000 patients age 18 or older who were taking simvastatin. Setting: More than 1,200 community pharmacies nationwide. Data was from computerized pharmacy records. Design: A questionnaire was developed to assess patient behavior at different points of time in therapy. Two groups of patients were selected: the lapsed group, who failed to pick up refills, will be compared to the adherent group, who has continuously picked up refills by the time of survey mailing. Each group was then subdivided into three groups. The three lapsed groups include patients who didn't pick up their first scheduled refill; patients who picked up their first but not the second refill; and patients who picked up their first and second but not the third refill. The three adherent groups include patients who picked up their first scheduled refill; patients who picked up their first and second refills; and patients who picked up their first, second and third refills. A questionnaire will be mailed to all six groups (N=1,000 for each group). **Results:** This is research in progress without results at this time. Preliminary results will be presented in this year's Compliance in Healthcare and Research conference. Final data and results will be submitted for presentation at the conference in 2005. **Conclusions:** Previous research has shown that patients' reasons for treatment discontinuation vary at different points in therapy. This study will give us insight about why patients discontinue therapy as treatment progresses. If successful, this study will aid health professionals to design targeted, evidence-based adherence programs in order to improve public health.

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