Adherence to Multiple Sclerosis Medications

While multiple sclerosis (MS) has no cure, many patients relapse throughout the disease progression. Medications such as interferon-b products can limit the number of relapses a patient may experience and slow disease progression. The article that I chose discusses the impact of adherence to these medications on the number of relapse events patients may experience. Some barriers to patient adherence are: psychological factors (depression or anxiety), clinical factors (adverse effects of the medications), cognitive impairment, fatigue and disease progression, financial factors (co-pays to pharmacies or reduced/lost wages), and physical factors (the idea of injecting medication into oneself). A patient is considered adherent if medication is taken 85% of the time, which will lower the risk of relapses significantly compared to lower adherence levels of 70% and below. MS patients who are adherent to the interferon-b therapy had better outcomes which included lower risk of relapses, inpatient admissions, ER visits, and office visits than patients who were not adherent. The patients with lower adherence levels resulted in potentially unnecessary and avoidable healthcare utilization. Patient education and monitoring should be accessible to patients in order to overcome potential barriers to medication adherence.
Reference