



**ABC Project Newsletter Issue n° 2&3/2011**

## **Ascertaining Barriers for Compliance: policies for safe, effective and cost- effective use of medicines in Europe**



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**In this issue: ABC-coordinated  
*European Forum on Patient  
Adherence to Medication*  
8 December 2011,  
European Parliament, Brussels**



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**The ABC Project** is the EU-funded research initiative to improve patient adherence to medication in Europe. The strategic goal of the project is to produce evidence-based policy recommendations for improving patient adherence, and thus raising the effectiveness of medications use by Europeans. The project's findings are expected to help health policymakers take right decisions to minimize the negative impact of non-adherence. ABC Project was launched on January 1, 2009 and will run until December 31, 2011. [www.ABCproject.eu](http://www.ABCproject.eu)



### **ABC Expert Meeting 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2011, Royal Society, London**

On 23rd June 2011 the ABC lead for WP7, NPC Plus Keele University, hosted the ABC London Expert Meeting at the Royal Society in London.

A panel of European experts discussed policy recommendations for Europe on medicines adherence. The meeting was held as a part of ABC Project's Work Package 7 entitled "Preparation of policy recommendation for promoting patient compliance in European healthcare". It gathered stakeholders from 10 countries: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, and USA. The expert group comprised academics, healthcare commissioners, policy makers, healthcare professionals, healthcare industry representatives, and patients and carers organisations. The results of the meeting will be recommendations on what to do in order to improve medication adherence in Europe.

The meeting was opened by Dr Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for the Department of Health, England. The starting point for discussion was the policy solutions that emerged from the Delphi study conducted for WP7. The meeting gave participants the chance to discuss the results of the Delphi study, consider how the proposed policy solutions might fit together, and the balance and prioritisation of the policy options. The ABC team at Keele are currently busy collating all the information and discussion generated by the consensus meeting.

A key principle of WP7 is the development of policy recommendations that are not only informed by evidence, but are politically and operationally feasible. For the next stage of WP7, the Keele team plans a national self-assessment study, and invite national officials of EU member states who have medicines policy within their brief to describe the extent to which the policy solutions have been implemented in their country and whether they have any plans to do so in the future.

The results of this study, and the final ABC policy recommendations for medication adherence, will be discussed at the European Forum on Patient Adherence to Medication, Brussels, 8th December 2011.



## ABC Consortium Meeting, London, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011

The sixth periodic ABC Project meeting was a working meeting devoted to assessment of project progress, especially within work packages WP2-7.

Bangor team presented the recruitment progress by country within the WP2 patient survey and DCE (discrete choice experiment). The deadline for completion of data collection from all the countries involved has been extended until March 2012.

At the meeting in Brussels in December 2011 data from at least 3 countries: Poland, England and Wales will be presented.

Keele team updated the consortium on the current status of the WP4 survey among healthcare professionals in the countries involved: Belgium – ready to start data collection, England, Poland, the Netherlands - commenced recruitment; Austria, France, Greece, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland – yet to commence recruitment following ethics permission.

Due to delayed collection of survey data in some countries, the consortium agreed to apply for unfunded extension of the project by 6 months, i.e. until June 2012.

## Facts and figures on non-adherence 21 September 2011 Brussels, Belgium

Bernard Vrijens and Przemyslaw Kardas, scientists representing the ABC project, took part in a debate entitled **“Improving the sustainability of healthcare systems through better adherence to therapies: a multi-stakeholder approach”**, jointly organised in the European Parliament in Brussels by The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU), the European Patients’ Forum (EPF), the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). It was designed as a platform for communication between patients, doctors and pharmacists.




Over 100 attendees took part in this meeting. It was chaired by the three Members of the European Parliament: Mrs Linda McAvan MEP (S&D), Mr Cristian Silviu Buşoi MEP (ALDE) and Mr Christofer Fjellner (EPP). Their introduction was followed by the presentation by Przemyslaw Kardas "Facts and figures on non-adherence". During the short discussion afterwards it turned out that the ABC project was well-known among the audience. Prof. Kardas used this opportunity to invite the participants to follow ABC outcomes through the project website and participate in the Brussels meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011, devoted to presentation of the major results of the ABC project.

## Roundtable discussion, London, 22<sup>nd</sup> September

On September 22, a roundtable discussion on the role of medicines packaging in helping adherence was organised and moderated in London by HCPC. Organisers invited several renewed opinion leaders, including two members of the ABC Project team: Przemyslaw Kardas and Bernd Vrijens. The major interest of the meeting was how patient adherence could be helped due to novel drug packaging. An interesting discussion arose over this topic, and a white paper is to be prepared out of it.



### ABC WP5 news



**WP 5 Objective**  
**To identify and assess compliance-enhancing interventions**

The objective of WP5 was to identify adherence-enhancing strategies, and components thereof that successfully improve execution of the prescribed drug dosing regimen and maintain long-term persistence.

A systematic literature review was conducted to identify randomized controlled trials that tested the effectiveness of adherence-enhancing strategies with self-administered medications. This review included only studies in which adherence to medications was assessed by electronically compiled drug dosing histories. Adherence-enhancing approaches were classified in 8 categories (Treatment simplification, Cognitive-Educational, Behavioral-Counseling, Social-Psycho-affective, EM-feedback, Technical reminder use, Technical equipment use, Others). A combined adherence outcome was derived from the different adherence variables defined in the studies.

A literature review identified a total of 67 controlled clinical trials published between 1979 and 2010 which met the criteria for inclusion in the review. Patients randomized to an intervention group had, on average, the combined adherence outcome which was higher by 12% [95%CI:9%-16%] than that in patients randomized to standard care. Study duration had a negative effect on the combined adherence outcome ( $p=0.022$ ). Intervention strategies that included a focused discussion based on feedback to the patient of his/her recent dosing history data, compiled by electronic monitors (EM-feedback), were significantly more effective than intervention strategies that did not include such feedback ( $p=0.0142$ ). The average combined increase in adherence among patients receiving dosing history feedback was 21% [95%CI: 10%-32%] higher than among patients randomized to standard care.

A large variability in the methodology in adherence-enhancing intervention studies was identified. EM-feedback is a general approach to enhance adherence to medications in which reliable, detailed, recent, electronically-compiled drug dosing history data are provided as feedback to the patient on his/her medication adherence. EM-feedback sets the stage for focused dialogue between the healthcare providers and their patients. As our study found, this approach resulted in substantive and statistically significant improvement in adherence to prescribed medications. An abstract with findings of this work package was submitted to the European Society for Patient Adherence, COMpliance and Persistence (ESPACOMP), a meeting which will be held on 18 and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011 in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The findings will also be disseminated via scientific journals over the forthcoming months.

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## ABC WP4 news

### WP 4 Objective

**Exploring the current practices of compliance management by healthcare professionals and the pharmaceutical industry**

The ABC Project partners have been busy with the many exciting parts of Work Package 4, which seeks to assess how health care providers, academia, and industry address the problem of non-adherence to medication. The largest part of WP4 is a survey of health care providers' awareness of medication non-adherence, their methods for addressing adherence issues, and barriers they encounter in improving adherence in their patients. Recruitment for this survey is has begun or is about to begin in multiple European countries. Surveys have also been conducted of the pharmaceutical industry and health care provider training programs. Results of these surveys are currently being analysed.

As part of WP4, we have also conducted a systematic review of medication adherence guidelines. This review looked at all clinical practice guidelines that address how health care providers should manage medication adherence in their respective patient populations. The guidelines have been identified, and final results are expected to be available at the December 2011 ABC Project meeting in Brussels.



### ABC at WONCA Europe 2011

The aims and objectives of ABC Project were introduced to participants of the 17th WONCA Europe conference on 10th of September 2011 in Warsaw, Poland by Prof. Przemyslaw Kardas. Pawel Lewek, Scientific Manager of ABC Project also presented a presentation entitled "Medication adherence as the precondition for continuity of care: in-depth insight into patients' perspective on the grounds of European survey". WONCA is an acronym for the World Organization of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations

of General Practitioners/Family Physicians. WONCA Europe is one of the 6 sub-organizations of WONCA World and includes all European countries and represents more than 45.000 family physicians in Europe.

### ABC scientific publications

The protocol for the healthcare professional survey, part of WP4, has been accepted for publication in the BMJ Open. It will be available online shortly as **Clyne W, Mshelia C, Hall S, et al. Management of patient adherence to medications: protocol for an online survey of doctors, pharmacists and nurses in Europe. BMJ Open 2011;. e000355. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2011-000355.** Below we quote the paper abstract.

**Introduction:** It is widely recognised that many patients do not take prescribed medicines as advised. Research in this field has commonly focused on the role of the patient in non-adherence; however, healthcare professionals can also have a major influence on patient behaviour in taking medicines. This study examines the perceptions, beliefs and behaviours of healthcare professionals: doctors, pharmacists and nurses about patient-medication adherence.

**Methods and analysis:** This paper describes the study protocol and online questionnaire used In a cross-sectional survey of healthcare professionals In Europe. The participating countries include Austria, Belgium, France, Greece, The Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Switzerland, Hungary, Italy and England. The study population

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comprises primary care and community-based doctors, pharmacists and nurses involved in the care of adult patients taking prescribed medicines for chronic and acute illnesses. **Discussion:** Knowledge of the nature, extent and variability of the practices of healthcare professionals to support medication adherence could inform future service design, healthcare-professional education, policy and research.

WP1 publication on "**A new taxonomy for describing and defining adherence to medications**" is currently in its last revision process and will be submitted to the British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology soon. WP5 publication on the **Systematic review of adherence-enhancing interventions** is currently being reviewed by partner 4 according to the comments of the ABC project partners. It is foreseen to be submitted for publication in the PLoS Medicine Journal.

Approximately 10 publications on ABC methodology and results are currently under way to be submitted to a few peer-reviewed medical journals.

**ABC at ESPACOMP 2011, November 18-19, 2011  
Utrecht, the Netherlands**



Join us for ABC Project results presentation at ESPACOMP 2011! The program of the Symposium has recently been published and we are delighted to inform that all the three submissions by the ABC Project partners, based on the project findings, were accepted by ESPACOMP 2011 Scientific Committee. Aardex Group, Project Partner 4 will present the paper based on WP5 findings: *Identification and assessment of adherence-enhancing interventions: a systematic literature review* during Session 5 on Interventions. NPC Plus, Keele University, Partner 5, will deliver the paper on ABC WP4 – *Building consensus on medicines adherence policy for Europe: the ABC Project Delphi Study* at Session 6 called Measurements as well as exhibit a poster entitled *Management of patient medication adherence: a survey of doctors, nurses and pharmacists in Europe*. Medical University of Lodz will also contribute to the poster session with the poster entitled: *There is no correlation between adherence to long-term and short-term treatments*. Registration available at [www.espacomp.eu](http://www.espacomp.eu).

### **Presentation of ABC final results at the European Forum on Patient Adherence to Medication, Brussels, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

We are proud to announce that the event organized by the ABC project team and devoted to overall presentation of its results was granted patronage of the European Parliament and the Polish EU Presidency.

As many as 100 addressees are expected to participate: Members of the European Parliament, health policy makers of national and European level, health professionals, pharmaceutical industry and other public health stakeholders.

The results of the ABC Project, including the strategy for enhancing effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of health systems in Europe due to improving patient adherence to medication, will be presented and discussed during the Forum. The details about the meeting are available on the ABC website in the News section. <http://abcproject.eu/>. Those interested in the participation in the Forum are requested to contact organisers by sending their e-mail to [abc@mema.keele.ac.uk](mailto:abc@mema.keele.ac.uk)

