Self-Compassion and Adherence to Anti-Retroviral Therapy

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Abstract:

Adherence to prescribed medical treatment is a serious concern for people with HIV and across a variety of patient populations, but previous research has failed to identify variables that can reliably predict adherence across patient populations. Based on the understanding that non-adherence often arises when people do not accept their medical condition, the proposed research examines the role of self-compassion in treatment adherence. People who are high in self-compassion treat themselves with kindness and compassion in the face of negative life events, whereas those low in self-compassion react with self-criticism, blame and self-directed anger, responses that may interfere with taking adaptive steps to deal with HIV. This research will examine the relationship between self-compassion and adherence to anti-retroviral therapy in 150 patients living with HIV, and examine possible mediators of this relationship. Finding a relationship between self-compassion and treatment adherence will pave the way for interventions to promote self-compassion in the service of enhancing treatment adherence among people living with HIV and other chronic disease states.