

Why increasing adherence to therapy is vital to improving patient quality of life

Written by Danilo Lancini, Patrizia Toia & Aldo Patriciello on 4 April 2019 in Opinion Plus
Opinion Plus

Candidates running in the upcoming European elections should ensure that adherence to therapy is enshrined as a right for all, argue Italian MEPs Danilo Oscar Lancini, Patrizia Toia and Aldo Patriciello.



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Mahatma Gandhi once said, “A nation’s greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members”. This is not just true for nations however; it is also true for wider societies and political leaders.

This was highlighted during a recent event in the European Parliament held to launch the [European](#)

[Manifesto on Therapy Adherence](#) [1], which calls on prospective MEPs running in the upcoming European elections to ensure that adherence to therapy is enshrined as a right for all, but especially for people living with chronic conditions.

Opening the event, Italian MEP Danilo Oscar Lancini echoed Gandhi's sentiments, noting that, in his view, the definition of an evolved society is one that protects its most fragile members, including the sick.

"I signed the Manifesto because therapy adherence is a crucial issue, a problem that affects our old people and patients. They suffer this problem, and we have to promote a law that fosters and raises awareness, both with the public and with decision makers in the European Parliament, to support this day on adherence to therapies.

Together, we should address the problem of these patients and old people suffering from chronic diseases, which need assistance and to follow the prescribed treatments by doctors".

Organised by the Senior International Health Association (SIHA), this event was an opportunity for European policymakers, healthcare professionals, patients, and industry representatives to discuss ways to ensure therapy adherence is a political priority for the new legislature.

Italian deputy Patrizia Toia said, "Adherence to treatment is a very relevant yet underestimated topic. Its importance comes from the impact it has on the patient's quality of life, while contributing to the sustainability of healthcare systems"

Currently, poor adherence multiplies the risk of adverse events recurring, which can lead to increased hospitalisation costing European healthcare systems up to €125bn annually. In addition, 200,000 lives could be saved every year if therapy adherence was adequately addressed.

To this end, the European Manifesto on Therapy Adherence is calling upon all current and future MEPs to turn their attention to this vital issue. As well as enshrining it as a right for all patients, we are also calling for the creation of a European Adherence to Therapy Day to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders – this was explicitly highlighted by Aldo Patriciello MEP – and for increased investment in patient-centric research, through Horizon Europe and other funding programmes.

Discussions at the launch event focused on the need for a cross-party, multi-stakeholder approach, with European Parliament Vice-President Fabio Massimo Castaldo urging his colleagues to work together to implement the Manifesto across political group and party lines.

Patient empowerment was also central to the discussions, with attendees agreeing that it was important to ensure that patients are informed and included in therapeutic decision-making.

Other topics of discussion included ensuring healthcare professionals receive adequate training on how to deliver messages to patients in the most effective and understandable ways, and how to strengthen continuity of care – with one credible figure such as a nurse, pharmacist, or caregiver available to support integrated care coordination.

Wrapping up the event, MEP Elena Gentile highlighted the need for a renewed vision for EU health policy, warning that if the EU fails to place the quality of life of its citizens at the heart of its policy priorities, or overlooks the challenges of an ageing society, it risks undermining its fundamental values.

This warning should remain front of mind as the new legislature begins to take shape.

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