

Researcher to examine why some patients ignore doctors' orders

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Taking medications as prescribed is challenging for many patients, and following doctors' orders regarding medication often varies over time and among different patients. The consequences of failing to follow the prescribed medication regimen range from mild to life-threatening, depending on the medication and the illness or condition being treated.

To help improve patients' adherence to prescribed [medication regimens](#), Jenny Shen, MD, a Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute (LA BioMed) researcher, is launching a study of [medication adherence](#) among patients with dialysis, a life-saving treatment for many Americans with life-threatening end-stage kidney disease. She will be examining why patients follow or don't follow their physicians' orders regarding their doses and the timing of [cardiovascular medications](#). She also will study how the patients' decisions about their medication affect their health.

"We are going to study why variations in medication adherence exist, and if these variations are associated with an increased risk of heart attacks, stroke or death," Dr. Shen said. "We will also be researching to determine if the risks change depending on a patient's race and ethnicity. Results of our research will aid in the development of tools to improve adherence in this patient population, which may improve their health."

She said patients on dialysis take an average of 15 pills per day, far more than most other [patients](#), and their compliance with their medication regimen is below 50%. Patients on dialysis also are more likely to suffer

from cardiovascular disease, with 42% dying from a cardiovascular-related cause.

The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at the National Institutes of Health awarded Dr. Shen \$906,054 for her study, entitled "Trajectories of Adherence to Cardiovascular Medications in Patients on Dialysis." This award is for five years.

Provided by Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor

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