



New Survey: ‘I’d Rather Take out the Trash than Take My Meds’

Research Highlights the Real Reasons Behind ‘America’s Other Drug Problem’

Norwalk, Conn. – May 7, 2013 – America has a serious drug problem, but it’s not the one you think. A new survey commissioned by [HealthPrize Technologies](#), a digital health company, found that 47 percent of people would rather take out the trash than take their prescribed medications, demonstrating how strongly Americans dislike taking their meds. More than a quarter of people (27 percent) would rather get a shot than take their prescribed medication and 10 percent would rather have a cavity filled.

Each year, 125,000 deaths in the U.S. are linked to people who don’t follow their medication prescriptions.¹ And at a time when medical costs are soaring, people’s failure to take their medications as prescribed leads to \$290 billion in “otherwise avoidable medical spending” in the U.S. annually.² Even people with serious conditions like cancer, heart disease and organ transplants often fail to take their medications as prescribed by their doctors – a phenomenon known as “medication non-adherence.”

“Taking medication is a daily reminder of your illness and your status as a ‘patient’ so it’s a negative experience that people instinctively want to avoid,” said Dr. Katrina Firlik, cofounder and chief medical officer of HealthPrize. “Psychologically, people tend to prefer actions that offer short-term benefits but most chronic medications provide no short-term benefits -- only short-term annoyances. So people may skip taking or stop refilling their medication altogether even if the long-term risks to their health are enormous. That’s the reality of medication non-adherence that needs to be addressed.”

The survey found surprising reasons for people’s decisions not to follow their doctor’s orders. Some people (25 percent) said taking their medication makes them feel old, while others said they feel worried (21 percent) or even frustrated and annoyed (14 percent). Still others (10 percent) said taking their meds reminds them of their illness and makes them feel sad.

The HealthPrize survey, which included responses from 1,021 U.S. consumers who take prescription medications regularly to help treat a chronic illness or serious medical condition, also found:

- Nearly half of 18- to 34-year-olds (47 percent) say paying for gas for their car is more important than paying for their prescription medications.
- 20 percent of women say they’d be more likely to follow a prescription for their pet than for themselves.
- Millennials (aged 18-34) are three and a half times more likely than senior citizens (over 65) to quit taking their medication altogether or simply never fill their prescription (56 to 16 percent).
- Women are less likely than men to take their medication as prescribed (45 to 36 percent).
- Of those who admitted to poor adherence, 46 percent said they did not trust or always trust their doctor.

An infographic illustrating the survey findings can be viewed at www.healthprize.com/infographic.

For more detail and analysis of the survey findings, the HealthPrize Medication Non-Adherence Report by Dr. Katrina Firlik is available at www.healthprize.com/report.

Methodology

The HealthPrize Medication Non-Adherence survey was fielded by independent panel research firm Research Now from March 8 to March 15, 2013. The responses were generated from a survey of 1,021 people who self-identified as taking prescription medications regularly for a chronic illness or serious medical condition. All respondents are age 18 or older and living in the continental United States. The margin of error for the survey is plus or minus 3.1 percent.

About HealthPrize

HealthPrize Technologies provides an innovative approach to addressing the problem of medication non-adherence with an online and mobile-based program that is fun, educational and rewarding. The HealthPrize system leverages gaming dynamics, behavioral economics and proven concepts from consumer marketing to maximize engagement while also using education to strengthen the intrinsic motivation required for long-term persistence to prescribed medications. For more information, visit www.healthprize.com or follow us on Twitter at [@HealthPrize](https://twitter.com/HealthPrize).

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References

- ¹ Bosworth, H. B., Duke University Medical Center, and the National Consumers League. (2011). *Medication Adherence: Making the Case for Increased Awareness*.
- ² New England Healthcare Institute. (2009). *Thinking Outside the Pillbox: A System-wide Approach to Improving Patient Medication Adherence for Chronic Disease*.