**Medical Neglect vs Noncompliance**

**The distinction between medical neglect and nonadherence is a fine one. Nonadherence is the act of not following medical advice. There may be a good reason (e.g., the wisdom of the patient), or it may simply be a lack of motivation, resources, or understanding.**

**When lack of compliance puts the person at risk of significant harm, it falls into the category of medical neglect.**

**What is Medical Neglect?**

**A failure to provide adequate medical care (including dental care):**

* **Failure to recognise obvious signs of physical injury, medical illness or mental health issues**
* **Delay in seeking medical care for an acute illness**
* **Ignoring medical recommendations**

**In those with a chronic illness it may involve missing medical or therapy appointments, not filling medical prescriptions or not giving the appropriately prescribed doses of medication.**

**This could be a form of self neglect in adults**

**Management of Medical Neglect**

* **Explain recommendations carefully to the patient**
* **Where nonadherence is occurring, document the treatment recommendation and clarify again the rationale for the therapy and consider a formal contract with the patient**
* **Consider using tools available for assessing neglect, as medical neglect may be part of a wider picture which could together reach level of significant harm.**
* **Follow the organisation’s guidance for those not brought to appointments**
* **If there is risk of harm consider a S42 safeguarding referral**

**Medical issues in self neglect**

**Neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings and failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs are forms of self neglect.**

**Self-neglect can be a result of:**

* **a person’s brain injury, dementia, obsessive compulsive disorder or other mental disorder**
* **physical illness which has an effect on abilities, energy levels, attention span, organisational skills or motivation**
* **reduced motivation as a side effect of medication**
* **Those with learning disability or Neurodiversity may be at more risk due to lack of knowledge, reduced motivation, or fear**

**Therefore, those in most need of medical care may be at risk of medical and/or self neglect**