

**What Did You Say?
Closing the Loop on
Patient Communication.**

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Objectives

1. Explore the relationship between health literacy and health outcomes.
2. Define health literacy challenges and strategies to overcome them.
3. Discuss available practices for teaching and assessing the health literacy skills of healthcare providers.

General Literacy Defined

“an individual’s ability to read, write and speak English, and compute and solve problems at the levels of proficiency necessary to function in the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.”

National Literacy Act, 1991

What’s wrong here...


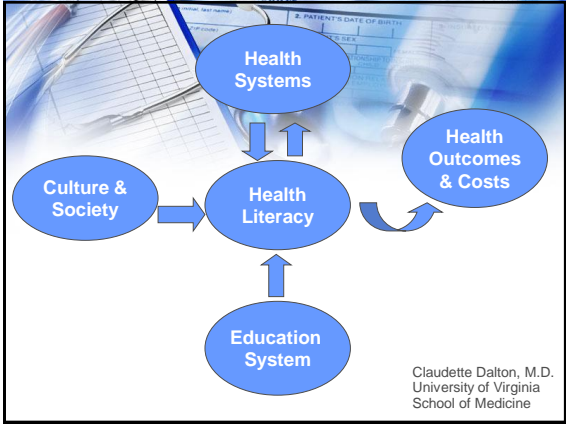
Which of the following is the strongest predictors of an individual’s health status?

- A) Age
- B) Income
- C) Literacy skills
- D) Education level
- E) Racial or ethnic group
- F) Average Beer Intake

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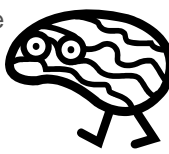
Health Literacy Defined

- The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (Ratzan & Parker, 2000).


Health Literacy

- Health literacy varies with context not necessarily with the person
- Low health literacy is NOT equivalent to low intelligence




Functional Health Literacy Skills

- Basic prose, document and numeric literacy skills



Health Literacy Needs in Healthcare (Rudd, 2002)

- Access information
- Recognize cues to action
- Access care
- Navigate institutions
- Complete forms
- Provide consent





Admitting

Health Literacy Needs in Healthcare (Rudd, 2002)

- Communicate with professionals
- Provide information for assessment and diagnosis
- Understand directions
- Follow regimens



How Big is the Health Literacy Problem?

- The 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) survey reported:
 - Approximately 90 million (36%) of American adults have low health literacy .
 - The highest rates of low health literacy were among Hispanics (66%), adults aged 65 and older (59%), African American (58%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (48%).

Low Health Literacy is Associated with...

- Individuals with inadequate literacy skills are less likely to understand physician instructions and recommendations, read prescription bottles, appointment slips, discharge and self-care instructions, and informed consent forms (Williams et al., 1995).



Low Health Literacy is Associated with...

- Individuals with inadequate literacy skills with chronic diseases are less likely to understand their disease, appropriate lifestyle modifications, and important self-care management skills (Williams et al., 1998).



Low Health Literacy can lead to:

- ✓ Difficulty navigating the health care system (e.g. Baker et al., 1996)
- ✓ Less use of health screening and preventive services (e.g. Scott et al., 2002)
- ✓ Higher hospitalization rates (e.g. Baker et al., 2002)
- ✓ Higher mortality rates (e.g. Baker et al., 2007)
- ✓ Higher health care costs (e.g. Weiss & Palmer, 2004)
- ✓ Overall poorer health outcomes (e.g. Kutner et al. 2006)

Cost of Low Health Literacy

Medical costs are almost 4x higher for patients with low health literacy (Weiss & Palmer, 2004)

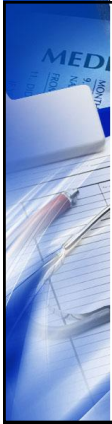
Recent estimates bring the cost of low health literacy to \$106 - \$236 billion annually (Vernon et al. 2007) .

Future costs calculated in present day \$\$ are estimated at \$1.6 - \$3.6 trillion annually.

Identifying Low Health Literacy

- Forms that are incomplete or incorrect
- Missed appointments
- Noncompliance with medication regimens
Or they may say...
- "I forgot my glasses. I'll read this when I get home."
- "Let me take this home so I can discuss it with my family."

Do Not assume all patients have adequate health literacy





Identifying Low Health Literacy

- Rapid Estimate of Adult Literacy in Medicine (REALM)
- Short Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults (S-TOFHLA)
- Newest Vital Sign (NVS)



Strategies for Health Communication

- Use common words
- Define unusual words
- Write instructions the way people talk
- No jargon or medical terminology

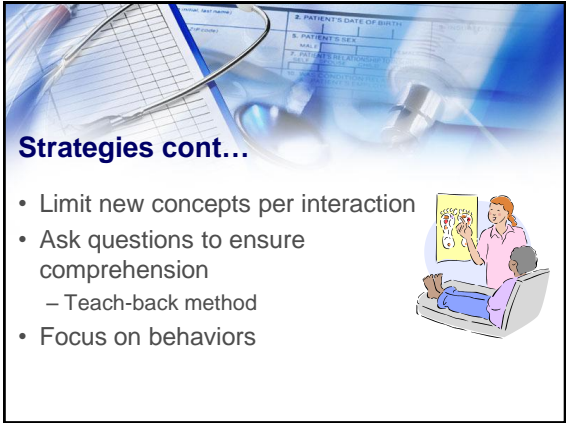
Strategies cont...

- Show/draw pictures to reinforce key concepts
- Ensure age and cultural appropriateness
- Translators





Strategies cont...

- Use demonstrations with real equipment

Strategies cont...

- Limit new concepts per interaction
- Ask questions to ensure comprehension
 - Teach-back method
- Focus on behaviors




Strategies cont...

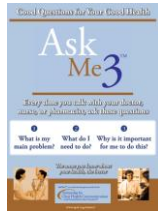
- Slow down
- Give the patient a chance to tell his or her story
- Create a shame-free environment



Partnership for Clear Health Communication

Ask-Me-3

1. What is my main problem?
2. What do I need to do?
3. Why is it important for me to do this?



Select Resources

- AMA
- Joint Commission
- IOM
- Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation



Select Online Resources

- American College of Physicians Health Literacy Resources <http://foundation.acponline.org/hlresources.htm>
- American Medical Association Foundation Health Literacy Initiative <http://www.amafoundation.org/go/healthliteracy>
- Ask-Me-3 <http://www.npsf.org/askme3/>
- Is Our Pharmacy Meeting Patients' Needs? A Pharmacy Health Literacy Assessment Tool User's Guide <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/>
- Medscape CME <http://cme.medscape.com/medscapetoday>
- National Institute for Literacy <http://www.nifl.gov>
- National Patient Safety Foundation (Partnership for Clear Health Communication) <http://www.npsf.org/pchc2/>
- Pfizer Clear Health Communication Initiative <http://www.pfizerhealthliteracy.com/>
- Reach Out and Read <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>
- Strategies to Improve Comm Between Pharmacy Staff and Pts: A Training Program for Pharmacy Staff <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/pharmlit/pharmtrain.htm>
- US Dept of Health & Human Services, Unified Health Communication 101: Addressing Health Literacy, Cultural Competency, and Limited English Proficiency <http://www.hrsa.gov/healthliteracy/training.htm>

Select Educational Programs and Institutes

- Harvard School of Public Health: Health Literacy Studies <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy>
- Health Literacy Center University of New England, Biddeford, Maine <http://www.une.edu/hlit>
- Clear Language Group www.clearlanguagegroup.com
- Health Literacy and the Older Adult (self-learning module) University of Arizona Reynolds Program in Applied Geriatrics <http://healthlit.fcm.arizona.edu/>

Thank You!

Questions?

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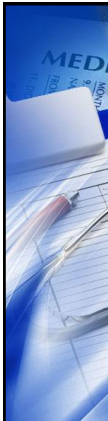
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