Health Literacy:

What Health Care Providers Need to Know

Version 2.0
Purpose

WIIFM

Objectives
ICEBREAKER Exercise
What is Literacy?

- “An individual’s ability to read, write, and speak in English, and compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society, to achieve one’s goals, and develop one’s knowledge and potential.”
  
  • National Literacy Act of 1991

What is Health Literacy?

- “the degree to which individuals have the capacity, to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.”
  
  • Healthy People 2010
True or false?

- Most people with a literacy problem are poor, immigrants or minorities
- People will tell you if they have problems reading.
- The number of years of schooling is a good general guide to determine literacy level.
## Examples of tasks on the National Adult Literacy Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Sign name  
- Find a country in a short article  
- Find expiration date on license  
- Locate one piece of information in a sports article | - Enter background information on a Social Security application  
- Find intersection on street map  
- Locate two pieces of information in a sports article | - Write a brief letter explaining an error on a credit card bill  
- Enter information into an automobile maintenance record  
- Identify information from a bar graph | - State in writing an argument made in a lengthy newspaper article  
- Explain difference between two types of employee benefits  
- Compare two metaphors used in a poem | - Summarize the way lawyers may challenge prospective jurors  
- Compare approaches stated in a narrative on growing up  
- Use table comparing credit cards to write about the differences between them |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Functionally illiterate</td>
<td>- Marginally illiterate</td>
<td>- Functionally literate</td>
<td>- Functionally literate +</td>
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<tr>
<td>- High-level literacy</td>
<td>-</td>
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Consequences

Did you know…?

This results in....

• Lower health knowledge and less healthy behaviors
• Greater health costs
• Poorer health outcomes
Age-related factors-Percentage

- 65-69
- 70-74
- 75-79
- 80-84
- >=85

Marginal
Inadequate
The cost of low health literacy

We All Pay!

- Cost is estimated to exceed $50 billion per year.
- Exacerbations of the problem
“Help Your Patients Understand”

http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/8035.html
Exercise” What’s it Like to Have Low Literacy

GNINAEELC – Ot erussa hgh ecnamrofrep, yllacidoirep naelc eht epat sdaeh dna natspac revenehw uoy eciton na noitalumucca fo tsud dna nworb-der edixo selcitrap. Esu a nottoc baws denetsiom htiw lyporposi lohoclal. Eb erus on lohoclal sehcuot eht rebbur strap, sa ti sdnet ot yrd dna yllautneve kcarc eht rebbur. Esu a pmad tholc ro egnops ot naelc eht tenibac. A dlim paos, ekil gnihsawhsid tnegreted, lliw pleh evomer esaerg ro lio.
Exercise: Translating Medical Terms into Plain Language
Skills for Communicating with Low-literacy Patients

- Red Flags

- Common errors
Tips to improve your communication with low literacy patients
Next Steps

What do we want to do together to improve our communication with our patients?
What questions do you have?
Assessment
Thank You!