All One Body: Creating Optimal Health Outcomes
October 18, 2013

Tools for Integration: Oral Health Literacy

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Health Literacy and Oral Health

1. Health Literacy - definition
2. Why it is important
3. You can’t tell by looking
4. Strategies to enhance patient literacy
5. Improving interpersonal communications with patients
6. Oral health literacy
U.S. adults lag in reading, math skills

Adults in Japan and Finland scored highest in an international test measuring life skills such as reading, math and problem solving, while those in the United States scored below average.

<table>
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<th>READING SKILLS</th>
<th>MATH SKILLS</th>
<th>PROBLEM SOLVING</th>
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NOTE: Tests scored on a 500-point scale. U.S. scores are based on nationally representative sample of 5,000 adults between 16 and 65 years old.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education
Health Literacy – definition

The ability or capacity to obtain, process (read) and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions... and follow instructions for treatment.

eHealth literacy:
- Traditional literacy
- Media literacy
- Information literacy
- Computer literacy
- Scientific literacy
- Health literacy
Why it is Important: Health Literacy as a Social Determinant of Health

A more robust view of health literacy includes

- the ability to understand scientific concepts, content, and health research;
- skills in spoken, written, and online communication;
- critical interpretation of mass media messages;
- navigating complex systems of health care and governance; and
- knowledge and use of community capital and resources, as well as using cultural and indigenous knowledge in health decision making.
Some health system problems experienced by persons with limited literacy skills:

- **26%** did not understand when their next appointment was scheduled.
- **42%** did not understand instructions to “take medication on an empty stomach”.
- **(Up to) 78%** misinterpret warnings on prescription labels.
- **86%** could not understand rights and responsibilities section of a Medicaid application.
You Can’t Tell By Looking

Mrs. Walker  Reads at 3rd-grade level
Strategies To Enhance Patient Literacy

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Your physician has recommended that you have a colonoscopy. Colonoscopy is a test for colon cancer. It involves inserting a flexible viewing scope into your rectum. You must drink a special liquid the night before the examination to clean out your colon.
Improving Interpersonal Communications With Patients

Six steps to improving interpersonal communication with patients:

1. Slow down.
2. Use plain, nonmedical language.
3. Show or draw pictures.
4. Limit the amount of information provided — and repeat it.
5. Use the “teach-back” technique.
6. Create a shame-free environment: Encourage questions.
Ask-Me-3

- What is my main problem?
- What do I need to do (about the problem)?
- Why is it important for me to do this?
Motivational Interviewing

- a patient-centered method of engagement and ongoing communication that is based on meeting patients in a comfortable, familiar environment; addressing goals defined by the patient; and gradually helping patients work toward more ambitious goals.

- a promising technique that is increasingly used by providers to support patients with complex chronic conditions and significant social barriers. Providers looking to better address the needs of individuals with low health literacy can use this model, or incorporate its elements into care delivery.

- For more information: www.motivationalinterview.org
Oral Health Literacy

Health literacy = oral health literacy

Vision: ADA - Health Literacy in Dentistry Action Plan, 2010-2015:
“dentists & dental team members... will use and promote clear, active and interactive communication with colleagues, patients, and policy makers to achieve optimal oral health for all.”
Take-Aways

- Keep it simple
- Check for understanding
- Write it down
- Use plain language
- Be specific & concrete, not general
- Demonstrate, draw pictures
- Repeat, summarize, & teach back
- Be positive, hopeful, empowering
Resources

Health Literacy Fact Sheets - Windows Internet Explorer provided by IE8 Policy Ver. 8 - State of Maine

Health Literacy Fact Sheets

Typical Fact Sheets
Author: Rekha Mahadevan, Center for Health Care Strategies
Published: October 2013

Nearly 36 percent of adults in the U.S. have low health literacy, with disproportionate rates found among lower-income Americans eligible for Medicaid.4 Individuals with low health literacy experience greater health care use and costs compared to those with proficient health literacy. Through all its impacts -- medical errors, increased illness and disability, loss of wages, and compromised public health -- low health literacy is estimated to cost the U.S. economy up to $236 billion every year.5

DOWNLOADS

Health Literacy Fact Sheets
Full Packet (407K)

Download Adobe Acrobat Reader to view these files.
Questions?

Thank you!