

Introduction

Low health literacy is a significant social determinant of health that is associated with poor health outcomes¹⁻³. Bringing attention to health literacy will aid in promoting the health of the population. However little has been done to implement national policies and interventions that address patient health literacy, especially in a community setting⁴.

We hypothesized that our assessment of the identified patient population's health literacy will not meet adequate standards and will indeed demonstrate a need for community-focused interventions.

Aims and Objectives

Aim I: Determine the health literacy status of patients who receive care at a community health center in southeastern Michigan

Aim II: Assess patient comprehension with regards to their health visits

Methods

- **Location**: Federally Qualified Health Clinic
- **Inclusion Criteria**: Patients 18+ years old
- **Exclusion Criteria**: Patients who do not understand or speak English fluently
- **Measurements**:
 - Aim I - BRIEF Health Literacy Screening Tool⁵, less than adequate (score 4-16) vs. adequate health literacy (score 17-20)
 - Aim II – short interview with patient to evaluate understanding of visit, compared to medical record
- **Statistical Analysis**: Descriptive statistics to summarize demographics; Chi-Square to identify differences in demographics and Fisher's Exact Test and Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test to identify differences in comprehension of clinic visit by health literacy level

Methods

BRIEF Screening Survey

- How often do you have someone help you read hospital materials?
- How often do you have problems learning about your medical condition because of difficulty understanding written information?
- How often do you have a problem understanding what is told to you about your medical condition?
- How confident are you filling out medical forms by yourself?



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Interview (Excerpt)

- What brought you to the doctor today?
- What did your doctor tell you about your health?
- Did you receive any information about your blood pressure? What did your doctor say about this?
- Did you receive any information about physical activity? What did your doctor say about this?

Results

Aim I: Health Literacy Status				
	Health Literacy Level			
	Less Than Adequate (n=32)	Adequate (n=76)	Total (N=108)	p-value
Age (Grouped), n (%)				0.2061 ¹
<55 years	13 (40.6%)	41 (53.9%)	54 (50.0%)	
55+ years	19 (59.4%)	35 (46.1%)	54 (50.0%)	
Race (Grouped), n (%)				0.8026 ¹
Black/African American	16 (50.0%)	36 (47.4%)	52 (48.1%)	
White/Other	16 (50.0%)	40 (52.6%)	56 (51.9%)	
Gender, n (%)				0.9492 ¹
Male	10 (32.3%)	25 (32.9%)	35 (32.7%)	
Female	21 (67.7%)	51 (67.1%)	72 (67.3%)	
Education Group, n (%)				0.0190 ¹
≤ High School/GED	15 (46.9%)	18 (24.0%)	33 (30.8%)	
> High School/GED	17 (53.1%)	57 (76.0%)	74 (69.2%)	
Employment, n (%)				0.2147 ¹
Part-time	3 (9.4%)	11 (14.7%)	14 (13.1%)	
Full-time	7 (21.9%)	29 (38.7%)	36 (33.6%)	
Retired	10 (31.3%)	17 (22.7%)	27 (25.2%)	
Unemployed	12 (37.5%)	18 (24.0%)	30 (28.0%)	

¹Chi-Square

Aim II: Patient Comprehension				
	Education Level			
	≤ High School/GED (n=9)	> High School/GED (n=12)	Total (N=21)	p-value
Health Literacy, n (%)				0.1194 ¹
Less Than Adequate	4 (44.4%)	1 (8.3%)	5 (23.8%)	
Adequate	5 (55.6%)	11 (91.7%)	16 (76.2%)	
Satisfaction with information received during visit, n (%)				----
Yes	9 (100.0%)	12 (100.0%)	21 (100.0%)	
Desire to get more information on topics discussed with physician, n (%)				0.6857 ¹
Yes	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (4.8%)	
No	8 (88.9%)	11 (91.7%)	19 (90.5%)	
Maybe	0 (0.0%)	1 (8.3%)	1 (4.8%)	
Chief Complaints, n (%)				0.6030 ¹
Accurately Identified	8 (88.9%)	9 (75.0%)	17 (81.0%)	
Not Accurately Identified	1 (11.1%)	3 (25.0%)	4 (19.0%)	
New Health Conditions Diagnosed, n (%)				1.0000 ¹
Accurately Identified	8 (88.9%)	10 (83.3%)	18 (85.7%)	
Not Accurately Identified	1 (11.1%)	2 (16.7%)	3 (14.3%)	
Proportion of Existing health conditions discussed, Median (IQR)	0.4 (0.3, 0.8)	0.2 (0.0, 0.5)	0.3 (0.2, 0.5)	0.0417 ²
Proportion of Medications to continue to be taken, Median (IQR)	0.7 (0.5, 1.0)	0.8 (0.2, 1.0)	0.8 (0.3, 1.0)	0.5584 ²

¹Fisher Exact Test; ²Wilcoxon Rank Sum Test;

Conclusions

- Patients who were adequate in health literacy tended to have an education level that is greater than high school. However, those with an education level of high school or less had a larger proportion of their existing health conditions discussed during their visit.
- Overall, the physicians at this particular community health clinic did an adequate job of explaining the visit to patients so that they were able to sufficiently understand their diagnoses and treatment, regardless of health literacy level.

Limitations for this study include:

- Sample size
- Single clinic
- Geographic location
- Variability in robust qualitative data
- Exclusion Criteria

References

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