

HEALTH LITERACY VERSUS INFORMATION LITERACY



Health Literacy versus Information Literacy

Health literacy is the ability of individuals to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. Limited health literacy is linked to difficulties understanding health information, a lack of knowledge about diseases, and reduced medication adherence. These factors contribute to poor health, increased mortality risk, inefficient use of healthcare resources, higher costs, and the perpetuation of health disparities (Liu et al., 2020).

Conversely, Information Literacy entails identifying the need for information, finding potential sources, formulating suitable search strategies, assessing outcomes, and applying pertinent knowledge to inform decision-making. Information Literacy encompasses the users' ability to access, interact with, understand, evaluate, and use data and information for a specific task (Dixon et al., 2017).



Impact of Low Health Literacy on Patient Outcomes

Individuals with insufficient health literacy may utilize more resources by resorting to frequent inpatient and emergency department visits, resulting in elevated healthcare costs and inferior health outcomes. Low health literacy serves as a more significant predictor of poor health compared to factors such as age, income, employment status, education level, or race (Shahid et al., 2022).

Consequences that occur due to low health literacy:

- Difficulty understanding prescription labels
 - Lower participation in medical decisions
 - Lower participation in medical recommendations
 - Lower attendance of follow-up appointments
 - Poor self-care behaviors
 - Fewer preventative measures implemented
 - Increased all-cause mortality
 - Low patient satisfaction
 - Impact on the physician-patient relationship
- (Shahid et al., 2022).



Promotion of Health Literacy by Nurses and Organizations

Nurses can enhance health literacy skills by simplifying the accessibility, comprehension, evaluation, and utility of health information about illnesses. Healthcare providers, including nurses, should be attentive to promoting health literacy to mitigate disparities (Wilandika et al., 2023).

Ways Health Literacy skills can be implemented include:

- Increasing patient's health information understanding
- Facilitate limited disease and treatment knowledge
- Improve patient's health literacy skills.

Determining factors that nurses and organizations must identify include information-seeking motivation, self-care agency, self-efficacy, self-care management, age, gender, education, income, internet technology, and prior health literacy knowledge (Wilandika et al., 2023).

References

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