



Health Literacy
SAN DIEGO

When Words Get in the Way: Health Literacy Training

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THE SAN DIEGO
COUNCIL ON LITERACY
IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE



COMMUNITY HEALTH
IMPROVEMENT PARTNERS
making a difference together

Objectives:

1. Define health literacy and understand its impact on patient outcomes
2. Identify methods to recognize patients with low health literacy
3. Learn evidence-based methods and strategies used to better communicate with patients with low health literacy



Training Outline

- Introduction to Health Literacy
- Organizational Changes to Promote Health Literacy
- Improving Health Literacy When Working with Patients
 - Identifying Patients with Low Health Literacy
 - Strategies and Methods for Better Communicating
with Patients with Low Health Literacy
- Evaluation



A collaborative effort between Community Health Improvement Partners (CHIP) and the San Diego Council on Literacy (SDCOL)



- Report: *When Words Get in the Way: A Collaborative Plan to Address Health Literacy in San Diego County*
- Health Literacy San Diego website:
www.healthliteracysd.org



**Can everyone recognize a
teaspoon?**



Are charts easy to read?

Which of the following is the **strongest predictor** of an individual's health status?

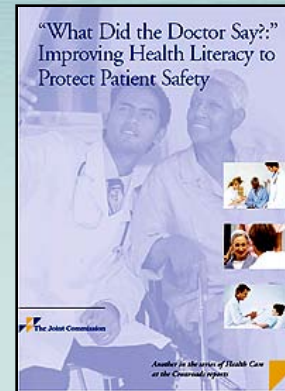
- A) Age
- B) Income
- C) Literacy skills
- D) Education level
- E) Racial or ethnic group

Health Literacy

“The degree to which individuals have the capacity to **obtain, process, understand, and act on basic health information** and services needed to make appropriate health decisions and follow instructions for treatment”.

Institute of Medicine (IOM), 2004 & U.S.
Department of Health & Human Services, 2004

Regulations



- Patients have the ***fundamental right*** and ***need*** to receive information- both orally and written- about their care in a way which **they** can understand
- Healthcare providers ***must*** ensure patient understanding
- Healthcare providers ***must*** provide patient-centered education

Scope of the Problem

- 36% of Americans have limited health literacy skills.
(NAAL, 2003)
- Up to 80% of patients forget what their doctor said as soon as they leave the doctor's office.
(NAAL, 2003)
- Nearly 50% of what patients remember is recalled incorrectly.
(NAAL, 2003)
- Nearly 1/3 of Americans are not able to comprehend health literacy quantitative skills such as "Give 1/4 teaspoon daily" or "Lose 10% of body weight".

Institute of Medicine: *A Prescription to End All Confusion* (2004).

Implications for Practice

Patients with limited health literacy have trouble:

- Navigating the healthcare system
- Sharing health information with providers
- Filling out health histories
- Acting on instructions and taking medicine
- Adopting health promoting behaviors



Changes in Demand and Complexity

Population changes

- Increasing rate of chronic conditions
- Growing elderly population
- Number of Americans with limited English proficiency is growing

Health System Changes

- Number of medications prescribed increased
- Hospital stays are shorter
- Heavier reliance on forms, written directions
- More self-management occurs in the home

The complexity of the healthcare system exacerbates literacy vulnerabilities

A Patient's Perspective



SCIENCEPHOTOLIBRARY

Identifying Patients with Low Health Literacy

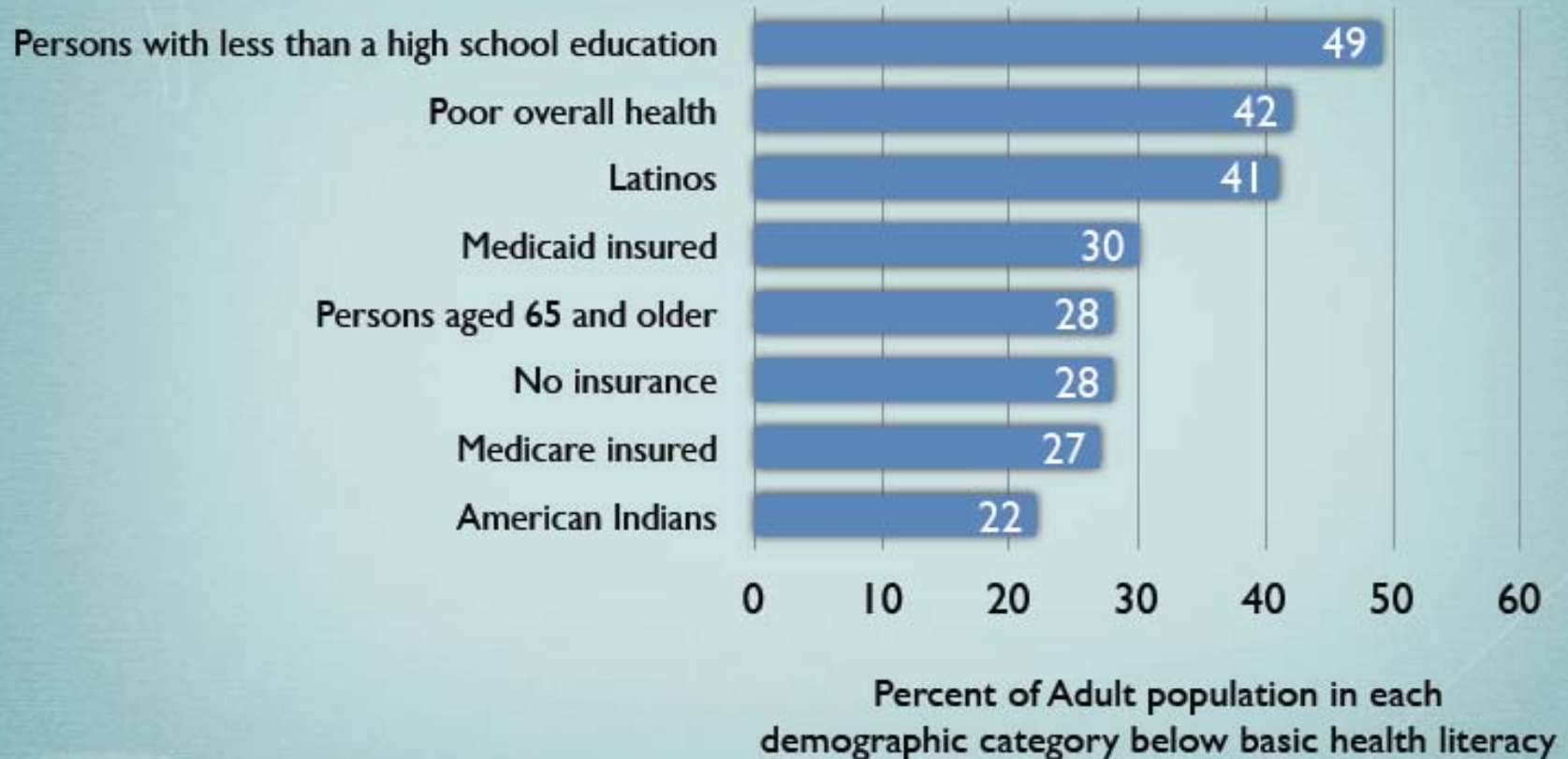
Myths and Stereotypes

- Billionaire executives have proficient health literacy skills
- Lack an interest in their learning
- College Graduates
- People can tell you they can't read

*You can't tell by looking and you can't expect patients to tell you.
Many have developed skills to hide low literacy levels.*

Health Literacy Level

The most impacted by low health literacy level



Source: 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL)

What YOU Can Do

- Health Literacy is Important for All Staff
- Signs



Health Literacy Friendly Signs Vista Community Clinic



What YOU Can Do

- Health Literacy is Important for all Staff
- Directional Signs
- Use Easy to Read Outreach Materials



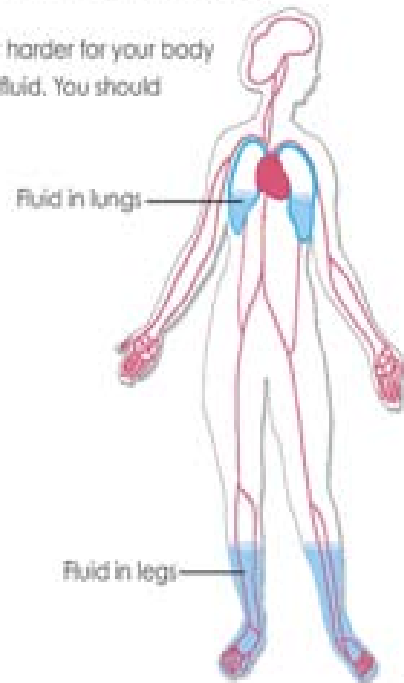
Congestive Heart Failure

With congestive heart failure, the heart cannot pump the blood well. As a result, blood doesn't flow well.

Fluid leaks out of your blood vessels and backs up in the lungs and the legs.



Salt makes it harder for your body to get rid of fluid. You should avoid salt.



Name: Maria

Information on your prescription for:

Amoxicillin

To treat an infection of the throat

**5 mL (1 teaspoon) by mouth
3 times a day for 10 days**

Nombre: Maria

Información sobre su receta para:

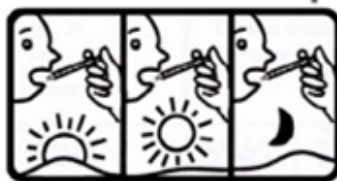
Amoxicillin

Para tratar una infección de la garganta

**5 mL (1 cucharadita) por la boca
3 veces al día por 10 días**



Shake well
Agite bien



Take 3 times a day by mouth
Tome 3 veces al día por al boca



Store in refrigerator
Guarde en la nevera



Give this medicine for 10 days,
even if your child is feeling better
Dé la medicina por 10 días, aunque
su niño(a) empiece a sentirse mejor



If you have questions call
the clinic (212) 562-5524
Si tiene preguntas llame a
la clínica (212) 562-5524

Read instructions from your pharmacist about your prescription. Lea las instrucciones de su farmacéutico acerca de su receta.

The H.E.L.P. Project Bellevue Hospital Pediatric Resource Center (212) 562-5524

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What YOU Can Do

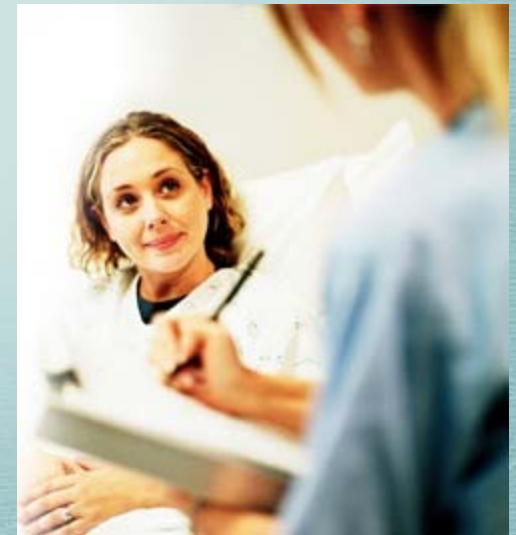
- Health Literacy is Important for all Staff
- Directional Signs
- Use Easy to Read Outreach Materials
- Cultural Competency
- Translators and Interpreters



Identifying Patients with Low Health Literacy

Recognize Red Flag Behaviors

- Poor Adherence to Medical Advice
- Vague Responses and Excuses
- Other Clues



Communicating with Patients

- Slow Down
- Limit Amount of Information
- Repeat
- Use Plain Language



Alternative Word List

Medical Term

Plain Language Alternative

Oral



By Mouth

Abdomen



Stomach

Referral



Send you to another
doctor

3 times more likely



Use physical comparisons

Communicating with Patients

- Slow Down
- Limit Amount of Information
- Repeat
- Use Plain Language
- Use Pictures

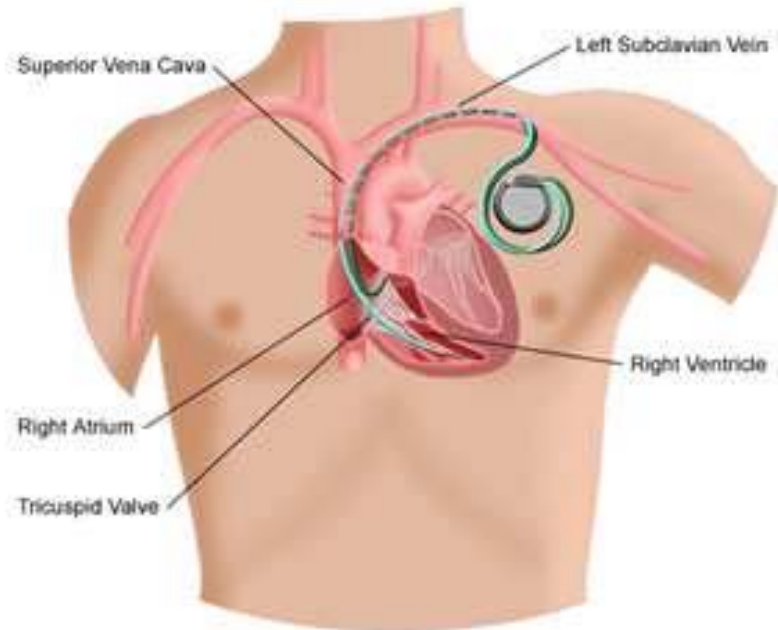


Hypertension

(High Blood Pressure)



Dual-Chamber Pacemaker



Your MEDICATIONS

Medication	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Bedtime
  Aspirin EC 81mg	 1 pill with food			
  Metoprolol 100mg (Lopressor)	 1 pill		 1 pill	
  Furosemide 40mg (Lasix)	 2 pills	 1 pill		
  Sotalol 160mg (Betapace)	 1 pill without food		 1 pill without food	
  Warfarin 5mg (Coumadin)				 1 pill
  Metformin 500mg (Glucophage)	 1 pill with food		 1 pill with food	

Figure 1. Sample of tool

Communicating with Patients

- Slow Down
- Limit Amount of Information
- Repeat
- Use Plain Language
- Use Pictures
- Confirm Understanding



Confirm Understanding

- Ask Open Ended Questions
- Ask Me 3
- Teach Back Method

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?



<http://www.npsf.org/askme3>

Teach Back Method

Staff Explains
New Concept



Patient Repeats
Concept/Instruction



Staff Assess Patient
Recall & Comprehension



Staff Clarify &
Individualize Explanation



Patient Repeats
Concept/Instruction



Successful Patient Recall
& Comprehension

TEACH BACK METHOD

Teach Back Scripts:

- **Just to be sure I was clear**, show me how you would use this peak flow monitor.
- If you were trying to explain this to your friend, **what would you say?**
- Let's review if you miss one dose of medicine. **What do you do?**
- **Show me how your inhaler works.**

Take Aways

- Effective communication = better healthcare for your patients
- There are lots of ways to identify patients with low health literacy - but you can't tell just by looking
- Using health literacy evidence-based tools & strategies can improve patient-provider communication
 1. Open Ended-Questions
 2. Ask Me 3
 3. Teach Back Method



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