Better Health from Better Health Literacy

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Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville / Albemarle – 2nd Annual Tutor Retreat
Background & Data
- What is health literacy (HL)?
- Patient voices – AMA Foundation video
- Virginia data

What’s It Like for Patients & Families?
- Patient Ed handout exercise

What You Can Do to Help
- Use “universal precautions” for HL
- Always use “teach-back”
- Non-English and easy-to-read English health information sources
What is “health literacy”? 

What is “health literacy”?

Health Literacy has been defined as the cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to, understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health.

Health Literacy means more than being able to read pamphlets and successfully make appointments. By improving people's access to health information and their capacity to use it effectively, health literacy is critical to empowerment.”

-WHO 7th Global Conference on Health Promotion

See also: U.S. DHHS definition

WHO Health Promotion: 7th Global Conference on Health Promotion, track themes http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/7gchp/track2/en/
Why does it matter?

CDC Infographic: Health Literacy
https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/infographics/healthliteracy.htm
Risk factors for low HL

- Age >65
- Male
- Non-English primary language
- Low or no insurance
- Poor/poverty
- Racial/ethnic minority

2003 NAAL National Assessment of Adult Literacy – health literacy subset
Patient voices – AMA Foundation Health Literacy video (4 mins)

AMA Foundation Health Literacy
https://youtu.be/ubPkdpgHWAQ
Video interviews with low HL patients

- Any surprises?
- What emotions can be seen in the speakers?

“There are so many smart people up there, doctors and nurses, and I don’t want to show how stupid I am. What does [x] mean?”
### Map Information

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<th>Health Literacy Levels</th>
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ERUTCNUP SITE CARE

- How long does it take you to read the passage?
- Do you know the most important problem to watch out for?

How can this be improved?
ERUTCNUP SITE CARE

☐ A lump the size of a quarter is not lamronba and will get smaller with time. If the lump gets larger call your yramirp care naicsyhp.

☐ Bruising at the site is normal. The bruise will go through many color changes. It may take lareves weeks to go away yletelpmoc.

☐ Soreness will go away within a few days.

☐ If you poleved bleeding or sudden swelling at the niorg site: lie down, apply direct pressure above the site. If you poleved bleeding or sudden swelling at the wrist or elbow erutcnup site: sit down and raise your arm above the level of your heart, apply direct pressure above and below the site with the etisoppo hand. If elbanu to stop the bleeding call 911 or have someone drive you to the closest ycnegreme room.

☐ Numbness and tingling of the detceffa ytimertxe should be detroper to your yramirp care naicsyhp.

☐ Remove dressing (if elbacilppa) 24 hours after your erudecorp.
Always use “universal precautions”

- Assume low health literacy in all people, e.g. even if they have a PhD
- Even if they don’t have any risk factors, still use universal precautions – there are always outliers
- Adapt teaching method and materials to individual’s needs
- Remember: even good readers benefit from audio/visual, e.g. video of the nurse changing a bandage
Always use “teach-back”

- What is teachback?

https://vimeo.com/165241622
Non-English health information resources

Online
- MedlinePlus.gov medlineplus.gov/
  *Always my starting point! Fully searchable in Spanish.
- Health Information Translations healthinfotranslations.org/
- EthnoMed (search Google/internet)
- UVA Claude Moore Health Sciences Library, “Culture, Communication, and Ethics” page hsl.virginia.edu/culture

Local walk-in health library (open to public)
- UVA Patient & Family Library hsl.virginia.edu/pfl
Questions?

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