Clinical and Interprofessional Education Considerations for Patient-Centered Team-Based Care

**Lunch Presentation: Better Patient Engagement through Better Health Literacy**

**Wisconsin Health Literacy**
- Statewide nonprofit organization offering education and training on Health Literacy
- Projects (Medications workshops, Med labels)
- Division of Wisconsin Literacy (77 members)
- Health Literacy Summit (biennial)

WisconsinHealthLiteracy.org

**What we’ll cover today**
- What is health literacy?
- How low health literacy impacts health
- Ways to better engage patients to help increase self-management care

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

1. Age
2. Income
3. Literacy Skills
4. Employment status
5. Education Level
6. Racial or ethnic group

**What is Health Literacy?**

“The degree to which individuals have the capacity to **obtain, process, and understand** basic information and services needed to **make appropriate decisions** regarding their health.”

“The Institute of Medicine 2004

**How can you tell?**

Patients with low health literacy may have difficulty:
- Locating services
- Filling out complex health forms
- Sharing medical history
- Understanding risk
- Managing chronic health conditions

“I forgot my glasses. I'll read when I get home.”
Day-to-day problems associated with low health literacy:

Understanding common words:
- Stool
- Bowel
- Colon
- Lesion
- Growth
- Polyp
- Rectum
- Screening

Patients less likely to know:
- How to use inhaler
- That weight loss & exercise lower blood pressure
- What foods are good to eat
- How to understand direct-to-consumer ads
- How to select a health plan
- How to take medicine

A real life example...

An 89-year-old man with dementia is diagnosed with an ear infection and is prescribed an oral liquid antibiotic: “one teaspoon twice a day.”


How low health literacy affects engagement:

- Difficulty with SDM terminology, e.g., ("benefit" and "harm")
- Less likely to ask questions
- Harder to evaluate online information
- Less activated: more likely to just accept provider advice

How low health literacy affects engagement:

- Harder to manage chronic disease
- Left behind by technology
- Less likely to rate satisfaction high
- Less likely to access care efficiently (e.g., ED vs. PCP)
- More likely to be readmitted

Health literacy of U.S. Adults

- Below Basic: 12%
- Basic: 14%
- Intermediate: 22%
- Proficient: 52%

Only 1 in 10 is proficient!
Who is most at risk for low health literacy?

Ethnicity:
- Entire population 36%
- White 28%
- Native Americans 48%
- Blacks 58%
- Hispanics 66%

Who is most at risk for low health literacy?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Basic or Below Basic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Adults</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Who is most at risk for low health literacy?

Education level:
- In High School, GED or HS grad 34-37%
- Less than/some High School 76%

Medical studies show most people suffer a 68% hearing loss when naked.

You can’t tell by looking:
The difficulty of knowing

- 2013 Study: 63% of patients had high likelihood of limited health literacy – nurses reported 19%
- 2002 Study: Resident physicians perceived 90% did not have literacy problems when 36% had low health literacy

24 million Americans have Limited English Proficiency

75-90% of patients in the 2 lowest reading levels describe themselves as being able to read/write English “well” or “very well”

Adults with limited English Proficiency usually become proficient speaking/hearing English long before they become proficient reading English
The Impact of Low Health Literacy

Those with low health literacy are **less** likely to:

- Adopt preventive measures, including mammograms, pap smears, flu shots
- Participate in preventive services, such as tobacco cessation and obesity prevention programs

What can nurses do?

1. **Adopt Health Literacy Universal Precautions**
   
   Since you can’t always tell by looking….
   
   • Take actions that minimize risk for everyone

2. **Create Shame-Free Environment**

   Even highly educated people prefer simple, understandable health information.
Practice plain, simple language

20% of American adults read at or below the 5th grade level.

Most health care materials are written above the 10th grade level.

What is a way to say each of these words in plain language?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medical Term</th>
<th>Another way to say</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adverse</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-inflammatory</td>
<td>Helps swelling and irritation go away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carcinogen</td>
<td>Cancer-causing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angina</td>
<td>Chest pain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Feeling sad or down</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It’s not just medical terms….

“I think he’s doing much better. We can move him from the ICU to the floor.”
- ICU Physician Consultant

“I heard the hospital was full but couldn’t you get me a bed?”

A word about numbers

- Do the math for patients
- Keep denominator same (5 out of 100, 1 in 10)
- Use frequency (1 out of 10) vs. percent (10%)
- Use comparisons/analogies

Show or draw pictures

Fever
Chills
Body aches
Cough
Sleepy
Headache
Sore throat
Runny nose
Sneeze
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Slow down

Speak clearly and at a moderate pace.

Limit amount of information provided

Only “need to know” concepts

Verify understanding using “Teach Back”

- Ask to demonstrate understanding
  “We have gone over a lot of information today. What will you tell your wife about your diabetes?”
  “I want to be sure I explained everything clearly, so can you please show me how you will use your asthma medication when you get home?”
- Do not ask: “Do you understand?”

Engage patients; encourage questions

Ask the right question

- Is there something else you want to address in the visit today?
- Is there anything else you want to address in the visit today?

Questions?

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