

Hidden Barriers to Communicating with Patients

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Objective:

Understanding health literacy and Social determinates of Health

How low health literacy and Social Determinates of Health impact patient outcomes

Strategies that help increase communication and compliance

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Understanding the Burden of Chronic Disease

Heart disease, cancer, diabetes and COPD

An estimated 133 million Americans suffer from at least one chronic illness

Chronic disease causes \$37 trillion in annual health care cost

Most chronic disease is caused by:

- Tobacco use and secondhand smoke
- Poor nutrition
- Physical inactivity
- Excessive alcohol use

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What is health literacy

Health literacy is defined as the capacity to: Obtain, process and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health care decisions.

- Estimated 90 million Americans have low health literacy
- Patient with inadequate health literacy are at 1.8 times higher risk for developing COPD and lower income levels are directly linked to the increase in severity.
- Causes medical errors, increased illness and disability, wage loss and compromises public health
- Estimated to cost the U.S. economy up to 236 billion every year

People at risk for low health literacy

- Lower socioeconomic status or education
- Elderly
- Low English proficiency
- Those receiving publicly-financed health coverage or other socio-economic assistance

Why is health literacy important?

Health literacy is not explicitly taught and can be a tough task to complete if skills are not achieved. Health literacy involves reading labels on food and medication, learning how to use medical equipment, understanding insurance paperwork, how to pay bills and when and where to seek medical attention.



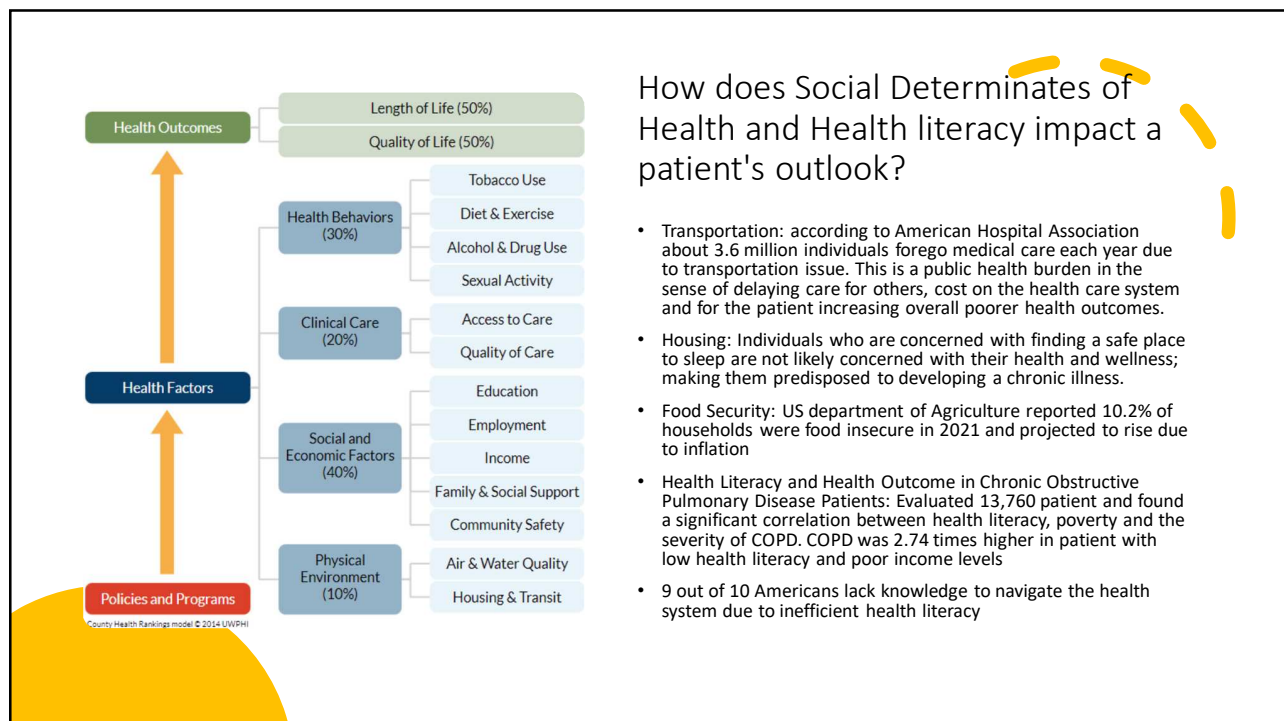
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Social Determinates of Health

Social determinates of health are nonmedical factors that influence health outcomes. The conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age shape the conditions of daily life.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Neighborhood
- Air/water pollution
- Access to nutritious food
- Physical health opportunities

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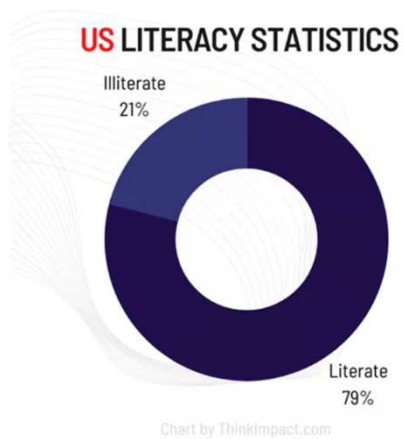
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Indications of low literacy

- Frequently missed appointments
- Medication non-compliance
- Unable to name medication or explain directions or purpose
- Asked fewer questions

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Consider This...



- The average time spent in a doctor's office was 17.5 minutes with the patient speaking 5.3 minutes and physician 5.2 minutes
- Patients understanding of a chronic disease in their first year is considerable low due to the overwhelming feeling and shock of the diagnosis
- 2003 the US department of Education conducted the first national assessment of health literacy skill and found 36% has serious limitation in health literacy and 21% were illiterate

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Patient interviewing

Primary way of obtaining comprehensive information for effective patient-centered care and medication history. The information gained while interviewing is extremely valuable

- Establish Rapport
- Respect privacy
- Recognize facial cues
- Be in the patient field of vision
- Consider your appearance
- Ask open ended questions
- Leave medical terminology out
- Listen
- Culture matters

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How Does Culture Affect Learning?



Culture encompasses beliefs, values, language, communication and practices shared by a group of people. It helps to shape relationships and affects a person's perception of health, illness, death and beliefs about disease and where, when and how a patient will seek help.

Family and communities influence certain beliefs

- Religion- Affects communication and interactions between doctor and patient it can affect the illness experience and health care outcomes. It is important to discuss religious observance needs with each patient upon admission.
- Race and Ethnicity- Cultural backgrounds can play a huge role in medical interactions including everything from eye contact to whom to address in the room
 - Asian/Pacific islander culture- The oldest male in the family often makes the decision and is the spokesperson for the family
 - Muslim culture- Have very specific privacy, modesty and dietary requirements including avoiding medications that contain alcohol
- Language – Those who do not speak the native language will consume more healthcare services and experience more adverse events than those who do
 - study found 30% had difficulty understanding medical instruction, 15.8% had bad reaction to medication due to problems understanding and 20% did not seek healthcare services in fear of not being understood by their provider

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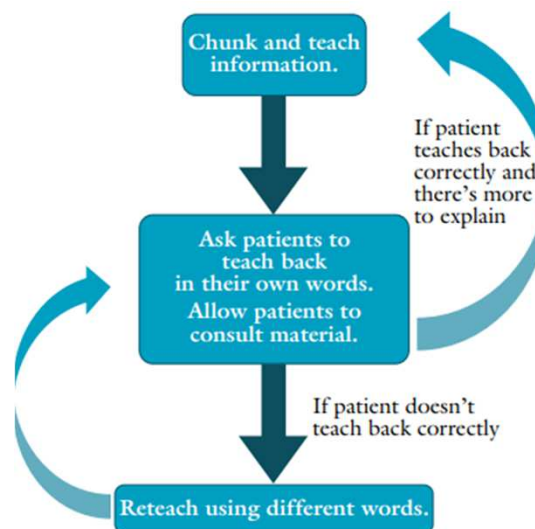
How Does Culture Affect Learning?

- **Environment**- A person's environment means their access to quality health care, personal behaviors, genetic inheritance, and external environment factors such as quality air, water, and housing conditions.
- **Social Class**-Socioeconomic status is the greatest determining factor for healthcare access. It impacts a persons physical health by influencing a persons ability to receive adequate medical care, nutrition and effects life expectancy.
 - Nearly 3 in 4 smokers are from lower income communities
 - Adults who did not graduate high school smoke at a rate of 21.5% and adults with an undergraduate degree smoke at a rate of 5.6%
 - Americans making less than \$35,000 a year smoke at a rate of 20.2% and those living in poverty smoke three times as much then those with a higher income
 - Tobacco remains the leading cause of preventable death and disease in the US including cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung disease and COPD

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Providing Simple Education

- Average American reading level is equivalent to 7th or 8 grade aim to create education material at a 6th grade or lower reading level
- Reinforce and repeat. Takes the average person hearing something 7 times to retain information
 - Briefly describe what is wrong (Use plain language)
 - Provided specific instruction on what they need to do
 - Emphasize the benefit
- Use the teach back method
- Medication management
 - What is the medication
 - How to take the medication (spacers with an MDI will deposit 70% more medication)
 - What is the benefit
 - Side effects



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Strategies to Improve patient understanding

Education retained by learning 80% visual, 20% by read and 10% through Kinesthetic (physical activity)

Use visual aids

- Visual learners make up approximately 65% of the population
- Studies have shown that using visuals in educational materials can increase learning by up to 400% and the brain can process images 60,000 times faster than text

Auditory learners

- 30% of people learn through the auditory method
- People tend to remember information better when they hear it due to memory recall
- Repeating information 7 times will increase memory retention and recall
- Auditory learners engage deeply with stories and examples

Kinesthetic learners (Need to feel or move to learn)

- Make up 5% of the population
- Need to actively participate in problem solving or a new task
- This learner often has trouble sitting still for long amounts of time

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Why is Patient Centric Education Important

Patient centered education is essential in chronic disease management. Creating an atmosphere of open communication between the health care provider, patient, family and caregivers.

Patient centric education has been shown to

- Foster communication
- Improve medical adherence
- Decrease hospitalizations
- Affect positive change in health habits
- Improve satisfaction scores
- Reduce expenses and increase financial margins

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How Can We Make a Difference?



Use interpreter services when needed



Pair two learning techniques to increase retainability



Confirm patient understanding by using the teach back technique



Ask open ended questions

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Take Aways

- The average time spent in a doctor's office has 17.5 minutes with the patient speaking 5.3 minutes and physician 5.2 minutes
- 65% of individuals are visual learners and tend to retain 80% of what they see
- Written material will not adequately inform as person when used alone. Pair with another learning style
- Repeat and summarize often
- All patients benefit from the teach-back method regardless of a patient's health literacy level
 - Chunk and teach information. Allow patient time to teach you. Reexplain or demonstrate as needed. Repeat
- Those who do not speak the native language will consume more healthcare services and experience more adverse events than those who do

BE A HEALTH LITERACY HERO



Nine out of 10 adults struggle to understand and use health information when it is:



Unfamiliar Complex Jargon-filled

Limited health literacy costs the health care system money and results in higher-than-necessary morbidity and mortality.



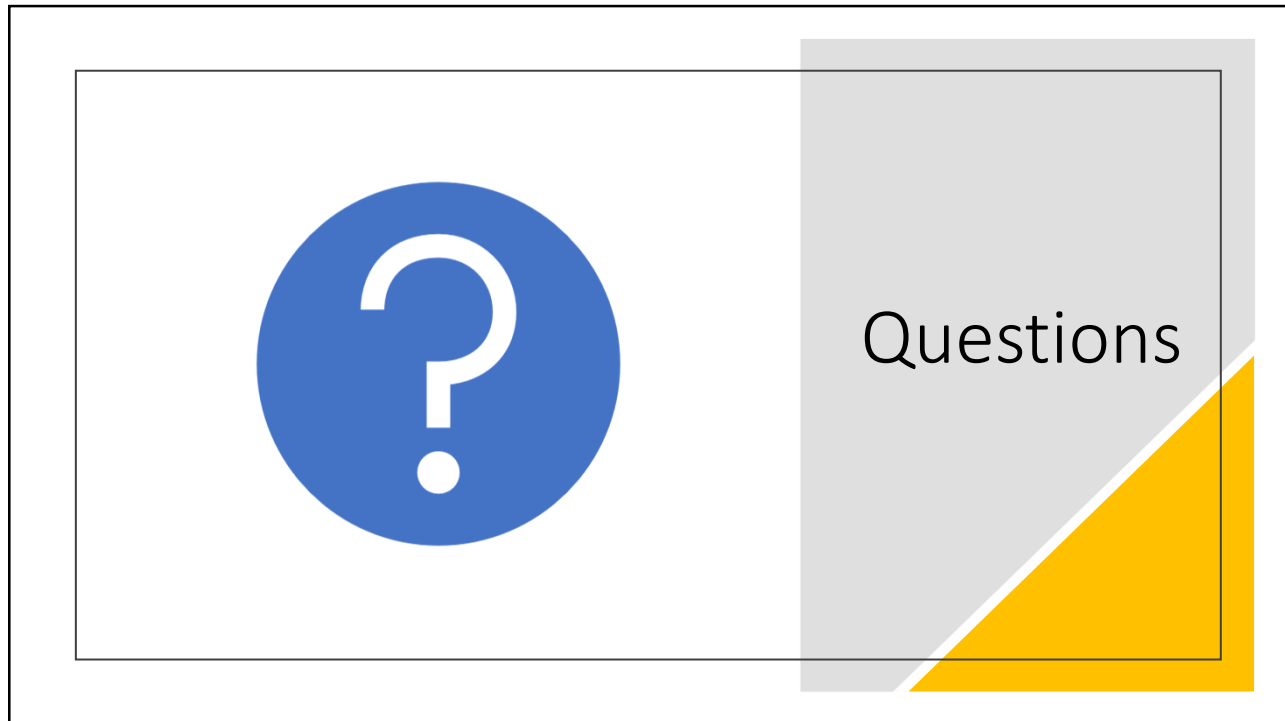
You can improve health literacy by:



Using plain language Simplifying numbers Accounting for culture

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016

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Resources

- <https://cbrhl.org.au/health-services-providers/universal-precautions/#:~:text=The%20universal%20precautions%20approach%20to,and%20communication%20simple%20and%20clear.>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8970619/#:~:text=Patients%20with%20COPD%20were%20found,of%20patients%20with%20inadequate%20HL.>
- <https://pulmonarychronicles.com/index.php/pulmonarychronicles/article/view/1169/2515#:~:text=Health%20Literacy%20and%20Social%20Determinants%20of%20Health%20are%20closely%20intertwined,can%20have%20long%20term%20consequences.>
- <https://www.euromedinfo.eu/how-culture-influences-health-beliefs.html/#:~:text=Cultural%20differences%20affect%20patients'%20attitudes,the%20consequences%20of%20medical%20treatment.>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5112982/>

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