



## Understanding your patient's health literacy level

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Annual Dialysis Conference  
March 13, 2017

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### Question

**Which of the following affects health literacy?**

- a. Communication skills of healthcare professionals
- b. Level of complexity of health information
- c. Information dissemination channels
- d. All of the above

(CDC, n.d.)

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### Objectives

At the end of this presentation the attendee will be able to:

- Define health literacy
- Explain why health literacy is important
- Make use of health literacy assessment tools

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## What is health literacy?

The degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information to make appropriate health decisions.



(Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011)

Literacy  $\neq$  Health Literacy

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## Why should you care about health literacy?

- Increased hospitalizations and emergency department visits
- Poorer health in general
- Misinterpretation of healthcare instructions and treatment

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## The National Assessment of Health Literacy

Assessment of health literacy in American adults 1993 and 2003

Score	Category	Description
0-184	Below basic	no more than the most simple and concrete literacy skills
185-225	Basic	skills necessary to perform simple and everyday literacy activities
226-309	Intermediate	necessary to perform moderately challenging literacy activities
310-500	Proficient	necessary to perform more complex and challenging literacy activities

(United States Department of Health Education, 2006)

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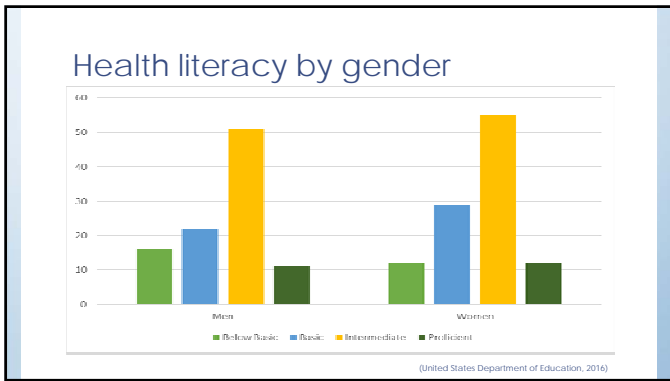
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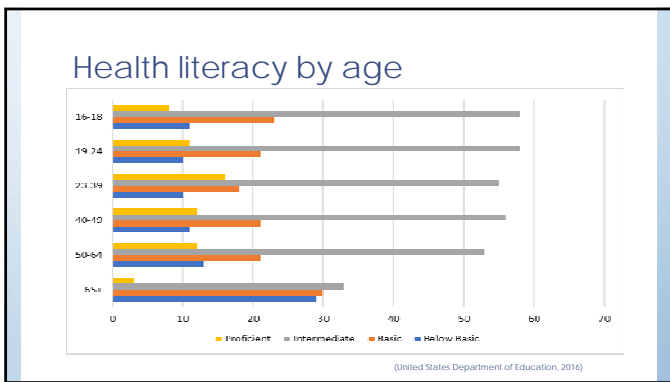
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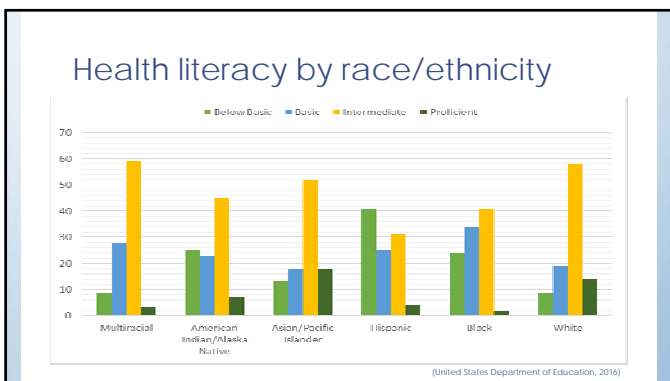
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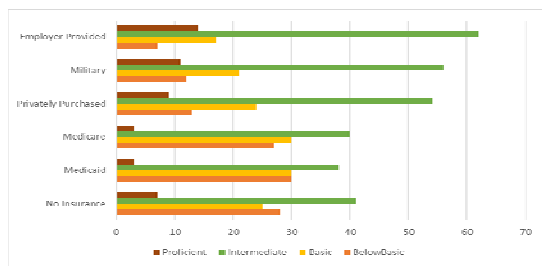
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### Health literacy by insurance



(United States Department of Education, 2016)

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### Identifying patients with low health literacy

- Don't assume



- There are many free health literacy assessment tools available

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### Health literacy tool shed

- Over 100 health literacy assessment tools
- Collaborative project
- Sponsored by the United States National Libraries of Medicine
- <http://healthliteracy.bu.edu/all>

(National Libraries of Medicine, 2016)

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INTERPRETATION OF THE NVS

RAW SCORE	Literacy skills
0-1	Suggests high likelihood (50% or more) of limited literacy
2-3	Indicates the possibility of limited literacy
4-6	Almost always indicates adequate literacy

Link:  
[https://www.pfizer.com/files/health/nvs\\_flipbook\\_english\\_final.pdf](https://www.pfizer.com/files/health/nvs_flipbook_english_final.pdf)

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Short assessment of health literacy for Spanish adults (SAHLSA-50)

Item	Key or Alternative	Score
1. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
2. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
3. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
4. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
5. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
6. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
7. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
8. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
9. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
10. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
11. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
12. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
13. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
14. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
15. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
16. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
17. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
18. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
19. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
20. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
21. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
22. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
23. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
24. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
25. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
26. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
27. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
28. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
29. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
30. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
31. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
32. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
33. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
34. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
35. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
36. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
37. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
38. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
39. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
40. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
41. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
42. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
43. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
44. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
45. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
46. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
47. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
48. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
49. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1
50. Leer y entender el contenido de un folleto de salud	1	1

A score of < 37 suggests limited health literacy

(Lee, Bender, Ruiz, R. E. & Cho, 2006)

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Examples of SAHLSA-50

Abnormal Empleo  
diferente similar trabajo educación

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### Short assessment of health literacy- Spanish and English (SAHL-S&E)

The 18 items of SAHL-S, ordered according to item difficulty from difficult item and discussion are listed in the table (number order is in the SAHL-S&E)

Item	Item in Spanish	Item in English	Item ID
1	...comprender	...understand	1
2	...entender	...know	2
3	...leer	...read	3
4	...comunicarse	...communicate	4
5	...entender	...understand	5
6	...leer	...read	6
7	...comprender	...understand	7
8	...entender	...know	8
9	...comprender	...understand	9
10	...entender	...know	10
11	...comprender	...understand	11
12	...entender	...know	12
13	...comprender	...understand	13
14	...entender	...know	14
15	...comprender	...understand	15
16	...entender	...know	16
17	...comprender	...understand	17
18	...entender	...know	18

A score of < 14 suggests limited health literacy

(Shou-Yih, Stucky, Lee, Rozier, & Bender, 2010)

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4	...comunicarse	...communicate	4
5	...entender	...understand	5
6	...leer	...read	6
7	...comprender	...understand	7
8	...entender	...know	8
9	...comprender	...understand	9
10	...entender	...know	10
11	...comprender	...understand	11
12	...entender	...know	12
13	...comprender	...understand	13
14	...entender	...know	14
15	...comprender	...understand	15
16	...entender	...know	16
17	...comprender	...understand	17
18	...entender	...know	18

A score of < 14 suggests limited health literacy

(Shou-Yih, Stucky, Lee, Rozier, & Bender, 2010)

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### 3 item literacy screen

- How confident are you filling out medical forms by yourself?
- How often do you have someone help you read?
- How often do you have problems learning about your medical condition because of difficulty understanding written information?

(Chew et al., 2008)

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### Single item literacy screen (SILS)

How often do you need to have someone help you when you read instructions, pamphlets, or other written material from your doctor or pharmacy?

- 1- Never
- 2- Rarely
- 3- Sometimes
- 4- Often
- 5- Always

(Morris, MacLean, Chew, & Littenberg, 2006)

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### Single item health literacy screen in Spanish

Que'tan seguro(a) se siente al llenar formas usted solo(a)?

- 1- Completamente seguro(a)
- 2- Bastante seguro(a)
- 3- Algo seguro(a)
- 4- Un poco seguro(a)
- 5- Para nada

(Singh, Coyne, & Wallace, 2015)

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### Health literacy universal precautions

Consider that no patient will understand what you're talking about



Utilize the AHRQ health literacy universal toolkit

Link:

<http://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/index.html>

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## The Triple Aim Initiative

- improving the patient experience
- improving the health of the population
- reducing the per capita cost of health care



Institute of Health Care Improvement, 2016)

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