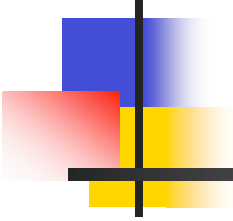


Pilot Study of Health Literacy Among Diabetes Patients in a P.H.C. Practice in Victoria, B.C.



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Background

- More than 40% of Canadians fall in the two lowest categories of literacy on the International Adult Literacy Survey
- A recent study in a Montreal Primary Care Practice found that the 7-9% of patients fell in the lowest category for Health Literacy
- This raises questions regarding whether the finding reflects other Practices and whether the measure used is appropriate for Canada



Objectives of Pilot

1. To identify if a significant health literacy problem exists among diabetes patients in one primary care practice
2. To pilot test measures for future studies of health literacy in primary care in Canada



Design

- One-time, face-to face survey with diabetes patients in Primary Care Practice in Victoria, BC
- Patients invited by letter to participate
- Followed by phone call
- Interviewed individually by one of two interviewers



Participants

- Diabetic patients identified with BC Chronic Disease Management Toolkit (N=70), of whom 33 participated; diabetes chosen due to the complex self-management required



Measures Used

- REALM health literacy test
- Health information reading comprehension test
- Diabetes self-efficacy test
- COOP/WONCA self-perception of health test
- SKILLD Diabetes knowledge test
- Health literacy measure of ability to access, understand, communicate and use health information



Sample

- Response rate 59%
- Those who refused were similar in age to participants but more males and fewer insulin users
- Majority of sample was retired, had an average of some post-secondary education, and a relatively high income (median income category \$30,000 – \$60,000)



Findings

- Mean perceived overall health on COOP/WONCA was 3.4/5.0
- Mean Health Literacy on REALM was 65.3/66.0
- Mean Reading Comprehension was 4.6/5.0
- Mean Diabetes Self-Efficacy was 27.4/35.0
- Mean Diabetes Knowledge score was 6.7/10.0
- 79% had high knowledge scores but 79% did not provide correct normal fasting and blood glucose and 76% did not know the normal HbA1c



Findings (Cont.)

- Majority had not sought information about diabetes in past year from any source other than their family doctor
- 15% had some difficulty understanding, communicating or using information from the various sources of information that they mentioned
- Treatment regime appeared to be related to diabetes knowledge and self-efficacy (e.g. users of insulin were more likely to have high knowledge and diabetes self-efficacy scores)



Conclusions

- Although the diabetes patients in the practice studied appear to have very high levels of health literacy as measured by the REALM and a comprehension test of health information, the majority did not have up-to-date information about diabetes
- This sample was not active in searching for or using health information related to diabetes
- More research is needed in Canada on larger and more diverse samples to better understand health literacy and its impact on self-management and health



Conclusions

- The patient-provider encounter is a good opportunity for disseminating health information to older diabetes patients



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