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## Literacy, Race, and Advance Directives Among Older Adults

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## Background

- Less than one-third of U.S. adults have advance directives (AD)
- With aging Baby Boomer generation, increasing need to discuss and establish Ads
- Previous research of AD adoption has addressed certain patient-level factors - little attention paid to role of health literacy

## Study Objective

**Examine** associations between health literacy and other patient-level characteristics with adoption of advance directives among older adults.

## Study Population

- N = 784 older adults ages 55-74
- Recruited from 1 academic general internal medicine clinic or one of six FQHCs in Chicago
- Data collected between August 2008 and November 2010

## Methods

- Structured cognitive interviews
- AD documentation and demographic data collected via self-report and chart abstraction
- Health literacy assessed using full TOFHLA

## Sample

Demographics

Characteristic	Total %	Have AD (%)	P-Value
<b>Age Group</b>			<.001
55-60	37.9	32.0	
61-65	28.4	43.1	
66-70	21.6	50.3	
71-74	12.1	49.5	
<b>Sex</b>			.78
Female	67.7	40.9	
Male	32.3	41.9	
<b>Race</b>			<.001
African American	43.1	22.9	
Caucasian	50.0	57.2	
Other	6.9	38.9	
<b>Education</b>			<.001
High School or less	27.2	18.3	
Some College	21.9	40.1	
College Graduate	20.3	53.5	
Graduate Degree	30.6	54.2	

## Sample

### SES

Characteristic	Total %	Have AD, %	P-Value
<b>Income</b>			
< \$10,000	12.1	16.7	< 0.001
\$10,000 - \$24,999	19.1	25.4	
\$25,000 - \$49,999	15.3	38.6	
> \$50,000	53.4	54.4	
<b>Work status</b>			
No work	64.9	40.6	0.02
Part-time	14.9	52.1	
Full-time	20.2	35.4	
<b>Number of Chronic Conditions</b>			
0-1	44.9	48.0	< 0.001
2	28.8	40.7	
3 or more	26.3	41.2	

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## Sample - Health Literacy

Characteristic	Total %	Have AD, %	P-Value
<b>Health Literacy</b>			
Low	12.7	12.4	< 0.001
Marginal	16.2	26.6	
Adequate	71.2	49.5	

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## Mediational Analyses

9 †<0.05; ‡<0.01

## Health Literacy Explanatory Effect

Characteristic	Model 1		Model 2	
	RR	95% CI	RR	95% CI
<b>Education</b>				
High school or less	0.59	0.38, 0.90 †	0.68	0.44, 1.07
Some college	1.12	0.80, 1.56	1.14	0.81, 1.60
College graduate	1.08	0.82, 1.44	1.08	0.81, 1.45
Graduate degree	---	---	---	---
<b>Income</b>				
< \$10,000	0.57	0.32, 1.01	0.62	0.35, 1.11
\$10,000 - \$24,999	0.69	0.46, 1.03	0.72	0.48, 1.09
\$25,000 - \$49,999	0.85	0.60, 1.20	0.89	0.62, 1.28
> \$50,000	---	---	---	---
<b>Number of Chronic Conditions</b>				
0-1	---	---	---	---
2	1.00	0.77, 1.31	1.01	0.78, 1.32

10 †<0.05; ‡<0.01

## Conclusions

- Literacy had a modest explanatory effect on AD completion
- Less than half of African-Americans reported having AD; literacy did not reduce this relationship
- Further investigation needs to be completed in order to identify factors other than literacy that play a role in AD decision making so that more effective interventions can be created

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