



**The Impact of Health Literacy
on Health Status
and Resource Utilization
in Lumbar Degenerative Disease**

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Introduction

- Examine health literacy/resource utilization in chronic low back pain in an outpatient setting
- Only 3 relevant studies were found; none in US-based population
- Health literacy posited to be related to patient outcome reports

Methods

- Patients recruited at Norton Leatherman Spine Center in downtown Louisville KY
- Completed measures of literacy, resource utilization and outcomes

Methods

- **Newest Vital Sign**
 - Administered verbally to patient
 - Required numerical skills
- **Health LITT**
 - Modified from online to paper-based format
 - 10 questions, reading comprehension
- **Resource Utilization**
 - Type of treatments, medication use
- **Demographics**

Methods

- Outcomes

- EQ5D: 5 questions with VAS

- Mobility
 - Self-care
 - Usual activities
 - Pain/discomfort
 - Anxiety/Depression

- ODI: 10 questions with back/leg pain

- Lifting
 - Walking, sitting, standing
 - Social life
 - Sleeping
 - Sex life
 - Travelling

Results

- 201 Patients approached, 186 completed both health literacy measures
- 17% (30) limited literacy likely (0-1 correct responses on NVS)
- 28% (52) possible limited literacy (2-3 correct responses)
- 56% (104) adequate literacy (4-6 correct responses)
- Limited literacy group had worse outcome scores than those in possible and adequate literacy

Results

- Limited and possible limited literacy groups (53%) used less medications than those in the adequate literacy group (80%)
- 30% of limited and possible limited literacy patients reported they had physical therapy visits after stating they had no physical therapy prescribed

Discussion

- In sum: Health literacy related to resource utilization, how questions are answered, and reported outcomes
- Potentially undermines outcome data; spine relies on patient reported outcomes as there is no objective measure

The image features a vertical, glowing human spine on the left side, transitioning from blue at the top to red in the middle and green at the bottom. The spine is overlaid on a dark background with a light blue grid. Several glowing blue and green hexagons are scattered across the background, some with bright light points at their vertices. The text 'Thank you!' is centered in a white, serif font.

Thank you!