



HEALTH LITERACY & VISUAL ACUITY

TRACIE C. HARRISON, PHD, RN, FAAN PROFESSOR

MICHAEL MACKERT, PHD ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON HEALTH LITERACY IN ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS FINDINGS.

- **System Barriers**

- Low or no vision rehabilitation is ineffective; especially low vision.
- Leaves individual with limited functional coping skills with which to obtain, process or apply health information

- **Physical Barriers**

- Difficulty organizing transportation and navigation of health facilities
- (E.g. cost of transportation, lack of escort)

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON HEALTH LITERACY IN ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

FINDINGS

● **Provider Factors**

- Lack of provider knowledge and experience caring for persons with VI
- (E.g. Provider assumes incompetence or caretaker involvement → insufficient patient education)

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON HEALTH LITERACY IN ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

FINDINGS

● **Individual Factors**

○ Low socioeconomic status; rural residence; new onset visual impairment;

○ Lack of education, diminished cognitive function; lack of health care utilization; poor general health

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON HEALTH LITERACY IN ADULTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS FINDINGS

● **Societal Factors**

- Helpless stereotype of the population with VI has potential to negatively impact their perception of individual capabilities

● **Communication Factors**

- Information provided in an inappropriate format
- (E.g. medical paperwork, education seminars, pharmacy directions)

Suggestions to Improve Health Literacy	Frequency of Mention
Improve rehab design	11
Establish evidence for effective low-vision rehab standards	3
Involve the population with VI in program/research design	2
Appropriately evaluate low vision treatment/rehabilitation	4
Provide information in appropriate format	7
Educate health care providers	6
Minimize financial cost	3
Make health services accessible to non-drivers	6
Tailor care to individual patients needs	8
Increase duration of patient interaction	2
Provide appropriate accommodations	3
Use interdisciplinary approach	3
Improve public health education	8
Improve societal awareness of VI	1
Improve patient self advocacy	3
Involve patient in decision making process	2
Utilize peer support	7

SERIES OF STUDIES WITH PEOPLE WITH VIS IMP

- How does timing of impairment affect your ability to promote your health?
- What does it mean to promote your health?
- Development of a health literacy questionnaire.

HEALTH LITERACY QUESTIONNAIRE

- Health Literacy Questionnaire for Adults with Visual Impairment, was created to determine how people with SVI perceive accessibility, processing and application of health information.
- A person with typical sight might be able to apply health information directly to their lives, which is indicative of their performance on the health literacy screening tools in existence.
- People with VI can also be asked to do this, but they also face issues with applicability of materials access, and application of health information that make it necessary to have HL assessed specifically for their unique experience.

NEW QUESTIONNAIRE OF HL

- The research team found that there are unique situations that require further adaptation of health information by people with SVI, and such situations can prevent health behaviors regardless of indicators of high HL.
- Hence, we created the likert type (5 levels of response) 10-item scale with a high reliability (**Cronbach's Alpha .89**) based on the experiences of people with SVI.
- In our previous study, this measure of HL was correlated with the Newest Vital Sign but there was no evidence of multi-collinearity (Harrison et al., 2013).

NEXT STEPS...



