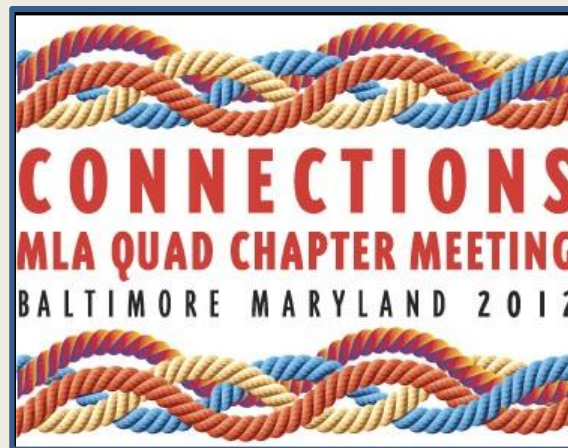


Addressing Health Disparities through Health Literacy Awareness

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- Background
- Content of class
- Repercussions/
results/ outcomes



UNIVERSITY of MARYLAND
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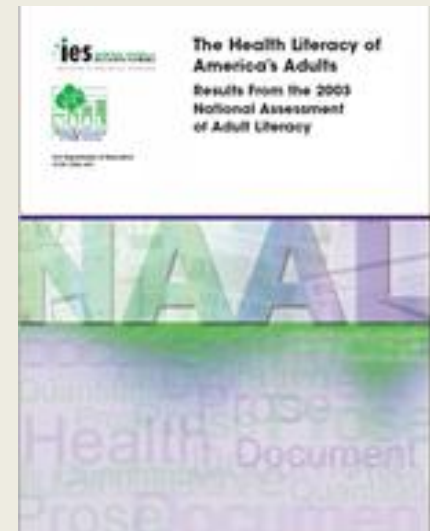


University of Maryland Medical Center

Named U.S. Hospital of the Decade for patient safety and quality

U.S. Literacy Facts

- The average adult reads at an **eighth-grade** level
- About 20% read at the **fifth-grade** level and below
- Low health literacy levels:
 - Older
 - Immigrants
 - Non-whites
 - Low income





Baltimore Demographics

- Population 620,000
- 63.7% African American
- 29.6% White
- Small but growing Hispanic population
- Over 4,000 homeless
- 11.8% over 65 73,000
- 19.3% below poverty line 120,000
- 26% population >25 yrs of age did not complete high school 161,000

In the United States, limited literacy skills are a stronger predictor of an individual's health status than age, income, employment status, education level, and racial or ethnic group.

Health literacy: report of the Council on Scientific Affairs. *JAMA* 281(6): 552-557, 1999.

Health Disparities

- Preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that are experienced by socially disadvantaged populations
- Directly related to the historical and current unequal distribution of social, political, economic, and environmental resources
 - US Centers for Disease Control

Class Outline

- Review health literacy facts
- Consider effects of low literacy on health behavior and self-care
- Best practices for clear health communication
- Introduce literacy evaluation tools
- Practice putting medical gobbledeygook into plain language

Evolving Title

- Health Literacy and the Consent Process
- In Other Words: Communicating with Your Patients
- Communicating with Your Patients
- Communicating with Patients

Results

- Workshop offered several times a year
- Library seen as having expertise in clear health communication
- Consent document review service

Challenges

- Getting folks to come
- Resistance: don't want to 'talk down' to patients
- Explain document during the consent process anyway

Extreme disparities: access to care, health literacy blamed for gaps

Health literacy explains racial disparities in diabetes medication adherence

Improving health by improving health literacy

Low health literacy and health outcomes: an updated systematic review

Teaching critical health literacy in the US as a means to action on the social determinants of health

THANK YOU



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