

The Role Of Health Literacy In Managing Non-Communicable Diseases In Aging Populations.

Sami Abdullaziz Alkhamis¹, Feras Mohammed Al Mahmood², Fahad Ali Al Asiri³,
Abdulrahman Saad Al Zeer⁴, Nayif Hussin Modahi⁵

¹Health service administration, ²Biomedical technology, ³Pharmacist, ⁴Psychologist, ⁵Dentist
National guard health affairs

Corresponding Author: Sami Abdullaziz Alkhamis

Paper Publication Date: 5th January 2019

Abstract:

Health literacy plays a crucial role in managing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in aging populations. As individuals age, they face an increased risk of developing chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

Understanding health information and being able to navigate the healthcare system are essential for effectively managing these diseases. This essay explores the importance of health literacy in addressing NCDs in aging populations, examining how it impacts individuals' ability to make informed decisions about their health and access appropriate care.

By improving health literacy levels among older adults, we can empower them to better manage and prevent NCDs, ultimately enhancing their overall quality of life.

Keywords: Health literacy, non-communicable diseases, aging populations, chronic conditions, healthcare management.

Introduction:

Non-communicable diseases pose a significant health challenge globally, with aging populations being particularly vulnerable to their impact. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that NCDs are responsible for 71% of all deaths worldwide, with the majority occurring in low- and middle-income countries.

As individuals age, they are more likely to develop chronic conditions that require long-term management and care. Health literacy, defined as the ability to access, understand, evaluate, and communicate health information, plays a crucial role in how individuals navigate the complexities of managing NCDs.

Methodology:

This essay reviews current literature on the role of health literacy in managing NCDs in aging populations. A thorough search of academic journals and research articles was conducted to gather information on the impact of health literacy on individuals' ability to manage chronic conditions. The findings were analyzed to identify key themes and trends in the field, highlighting the importance of health literacy in promoting better health outcomes for older adults.

Discussion:

Health literacy is essential for individuals to effectively manage NCDs in aging populations. Older adults with limited health literacy may struggle to understand medical instructions, medication schedules, and treatment plans, leading to poorer health outcomes. Low health literacy levels are also associated with higher rates of hospitalization, healthcare costs, and mortality. By contrast, individuals with higher health literacy are better

equipped to make informed decisions about their health, engage in preventive behaviors, and adhere to treatment regimens. Furthermore, health literacy influences the ability of aging populations to access and navigate the healthcare system. Individuals with limited health literacy may face barriers to care, such as difficulty understanding medical forms, communicating with healthcare providers, and advocating for their needs. This can result in delays in diagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and overall dissatisfaction with the healthcare experience. Improving health literacy levels among older adults is crucial for ensuring equitable access to quality care and promoting better health outcomes.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, health literacy plays a vital role in managing NCDs in aging populations. By improving health literacy levels among older adults, we can empower them to take control of their health, make informed decisions, and access appropriate care. Strategies to enhance health literacy include providing clear communication, simplifying health information, and engaging patients in shared decision-making. Investing in health literacy initiatives can lead to better health outcomes, reduced healthcare costs, and improved quality of life for aging populations. As the prevalence of NCDs continues to rise, addressing health literacy will be essential in promoting healthy aging and reducing the burden of chronic diseases.

References:

1. SÃ,rensen K, et al. Health literacy and public health: A systematic review and integration of definitions and models. *BMC Public Health*. 2012;12:80.
2. Duong TV, et al. Measuring health literacy in Asia: Validation of the HLS-EU-Q47 survey tool in six Asian countries. *J Epidemiol*. 2017;27(2):80-86.
3. Berkman ND, et al. Low health literacy and health outcomes: An updated systematic review. *Ann Intern Med*. 2011;155(2):97-107.
4. Rudd RE, et al. Improving Americans' health literacy. *N Engl J Med*. 2010;363(24):2283-2285.
5. Rootman I, et al. Literacy and health research in Canada: Where have we been and where should we go? *Can J Public Health*. 2009;100(3):48-55.
6. Nutbeam D. Health literacy as a public health goal: A challenge for contemporary health education and communication strategies into the 21st century. *Health Promot Int*. 2000;15(3):259-267.
7. Institute of Medicine. *Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2004.
8. Schillinger D, et al. Association of health literacy with diabetes outcomes. *JAMA*. 2002;288(4):475-482.
9. Baker DW, et al. The association between health literacy and health outcomes in diabetes and hypertension-related care. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2006;21(12):1404-1412.
10. Koh HK, et al. New federal policy initiatives to boost health literacy can help the nation move beyond the cycle of costly 'crisis care'. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2012;31(2):434-443.