

Improving Organizational Health Literacy: Having an Aid to Help Patients



Shabnam S. Bhuiyan, PhD, MS, CHW
University of Incarnate Word

Background

- About 91 million US adults face challenges with health information (Ahima Foundation).
- Low health literacy costs \$349 billion per year in the US.
- People with low health literacy have four times more increased healthcare costs, 6% more hospital visits, and two days longer hospital stays than those with increased health literacy.
- About 76% of consumers do not leave physicians' offices with favorable notes.
- About 74% of Spanish-speaking patients lack adequate health literacy compared to 7% of English-speaking patients.
- Low Health literacy impacts health outcomes negatively.

This poster aims to propose a health aid in healthcare facilities to improve health literacy and patients’ health outcomes.

Importance

- Increase medication errors & ,challenges to maintaining a follow-up care plan for any health issue.
- There is a lower chance of using preventive care and services.
- It is hard to follow directions with those having chronic diseases.
- Low literacy rates increase extended hospital stays, higher readmission to hospitals, and more emergency visits.
- Increase in incidence of morbidity and mortality
- Less tendency to follow proper responses to public health emergencies.

Proposal

- Organizational health literacy is crucial for patients and healthcare workers.
- It will improve the health outcomes for patients and reduce the load from HCWs.
- Another health literacy aid in healthcare facilities will be beneficial. This aid can provide in-depth information regarding patients' illnesses or health concerns.
- It is often observed in healthcare facilities that healthcare workers do not have enough time to introduce any disease thoroughly. Patients are sent home with an Aid to Help patients with printed material that they do not read often, or some people do not have enough health literacy to understand the directions, which may prevent them from following care plans and, therefore, decrease the desired outcome of the treatment.
- Also, the internet is full of lots of information. Some are accurate, and some are not. Some information is scary and makes readers think they are in a real crisis, or some may indicate a severe and trivial issue if someone does not have adequate literacy.
- People with different native languages may also face challenges in understanding the direction.

Proposed Plan of Actions

- A patient's aide can spend a reasonable amount of time going through the printed handout to the patients, explaining all the aspects and how to follow the care plan properly.
- A new degree program can be implemented with basic science, medical knowledge, and recent disease outbreaks.
- It should be an ongoing learning field, with regular attendance at classes, seminars, and other activities to keep up with disease information.
- An excellent educator experience is also needed to explain to patients and answer questions.
- A nurse, a medical assistant, or a community health worker can obtain this degree to perform this job.
- An organization should assess and evaluate this field to determine whether it improves treatment outcomes or patient health outcomes or notes.

Conclusion

Improving health literacy helps not only organizations but also individuals improve their health condition. It will reduce the cost associated with low health literacy in the USA and improve health equity and the overall health of the population. It will help people to follow through with any care plan, follow preventive measures, and reduce the burden on healthcare workers, which is overall beneficial for patients, healthcare workers, and any population.

References

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