Health Literacy and the Culture of Health in the UAE

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Objectives

- Provide an overview of health literacy and some key concepts
- Share knowledge of health literacy as an individual and population health tool
- Discuss the potential impact of health literacy as an influencer on Chronic Disease Status in the UAE
- Discuss strategies for incorporating health literacy into service delivery systems
Can This Be True?

- Approximately 50 percent of patients leave the physician’s office visit without understanding what the physician has said (Roter & Hall, 1989).

- Most patients forget up to 80 percent of what their clinicians tell them as soon as they leave the clinic.

- Approximately 50 percent of what patients remember is incorrect (Weiss et al., 2005).
238 Female students participated

29.41% of students had adequate understanding of health knowledge

38% of students who had experience with Diabetes, had adequate HL

40% of students who had experience with Obesity, had adequate HL

45% of students who had experience with heart disease, had adequate HL

Jawaher Al Dhuhoori, Zayed University, 2017
What is Health Literacy?

Health literacy (HL) is defined as:

The capacity to obtain, process and understand basic health information and services in order to make appropriate health decisions

- IOM Health Literacy
Health Literacy is A Tool: Not an End Goal

- Individual – Self Efficacy
- Community – Healthy Environments with Healthy and Productive Individuals
- Health Care Providers – Quality of Care
  - Patient-Centered Care
  - Mutual Decision Making about Treatment Approaches
  - Patient Satisfaction
- Health Care Insurers/Government
  - Patient Safety
  - Quality of Care
  - Cost Efficiency
Health Literacy Survey – European Union (HLS-EU) Conceptual Model
Health Literacy: Knowledge about Health Conditions and Treatment

Persons with limited health literacy skills:

- More likely to have chronic conditions and less likely to manage them, and taking prescriptions effectively

- Limited knowledge of their illness (e.g., diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure) and its management
Low Health Literacy Results In:

- Higher utilization and misuse of health care services
  - Experience more preventable hospital visits and admissions
- Overuse of Specialty and Emergency Services
Low Health Literacy Results In:

- Skipping preventive measures such as:
  - Mammograms
  - Pap Smears
  - Colonoscopies
  - Diabetes Screening
  - Prostate Screening
- Self-reporting of health as "poor or fair"
Low Health Literacy Results In:

- Higher Healthcare Costs
- Poor Care Coordination
- Paradox of Excess and Deprivation
Value of Health Literacy

Individual Level:

- Take Ownership of Health
- Navigate the healthcare system
- Participate in Mutual Decision Making
- Actively engage in self-care and chronic disease management
- Adopt health-promoting behaviors, such as exercising and eating a healthy diet
- Act on health-related news and announcements
Benefits of Health Literacy

Provider and Health Care Systems Level:

- Improves self-management of chronic illnesses
- Improves quality of care
- Increases patient safety
- Can reduce costs of care
- Improves tracking of health status
Health Literacy and Quality of Care

Quality equals:
- Appropriate services
- Technically competent manner
- Good communication
- Shared decisionmaking
- Cultural sensitivity

- IOM. Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century. 2001
Who Is at Risk?

- Older adults
- The poor
- People with limited education
- Vulnerable populations, such as Refugees/Immigrants
- Persons with limited language proficiency
Chronic Disease Risk and Limited Health Literacy

Many of the same populations at risk for limited health literacy also suffer from chronic conditions:

- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Vitamin D Deficiency
- Oral disease
- Cancer deaths
- Low birth weight
- Death
Strategies to Improve Health Literacy

- Improve the usability of health information
- Improve the understanding of health services
- Build knowledge to improve decisionmaking
- Advocate for health literacy improvement
Health and Health Utilization Issues

Two Major Health Issues Facing United Arab Emirates:

- Overweight and Obesity
- Diabetes and Its Complications

Additional Concerns:

- Overuse/misuse of health services
- Visiting several different clinicians for same concern
- No coordination among clinicians
Contributing Factors for Chronic Health Issues in the UAE

- Unhealthy lifestyles
- Lack of physical activity
- Tobacco consumption
- Long work hours
- High summer temperatures
- Poor diets e.g., fast food, processed foods
Overweight, Obesity and Body Mass Index (BMI)

- 47 percent Overweight
- 13 percent Obese
- 40 percent Children 11-16 years obese
- 5 percent Children under 11 years obese

BMI Rate Increases with Age
- 20 – 24 years – 35 percent
- 30 – 34 years – 53 percent
- 45 – 49 years – 71 percent
- 60 – 64 years – 86 percent

Zurich International Life, 2016
Ministry of Health Survey
Childhood Overweight and Obesity

- 26,781 children in government schools in Dubai and the Northern Emirates

- The study showed:
  - 16.1 percent obese
  - 32.3 percent overweight
  - 4.4 percent morbidly obese
Gender Differences

- Men – 70 percent overweight with BMI average – 26.4

- Women – 41 percent with BMI average – 24.2
# Nationalities with Highest BMIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Average BMI</th>
<th>Overweight/Obese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>27.60</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>27.15</td>
<td>76.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>26.97</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>26.54</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>26.51</td>
<td>75.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>26.50</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>26.46</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>26.39</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>26.38</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>26.37</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Minimum of 100 applicants per group*
# Nationalities with Lowest BMIs

## Nationalities with the lowest average BMI in the UAE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Average BMI</th>
<th>Overweight/Obese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>24.34</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>25.01</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>25.10</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>56.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minimum of 100 applicants per group
## Diabetes in the UAE - 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Adult Population (1000s)</td>
<td>7,442</td>
<td>Number of deaths in adults due to Diabetes</td>
<td>1,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20 - 79 years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of Diabetes in Adults (20 – 79 years)</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>Cost per person with Diabetes (USD)</td>
<td>2,155.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases of adults (20-79 years) with Diabetes (1000s)</td>
<td>1,086.3</td>
<td>Number of cases of Diabetes in adults that are undiagnosed (1000s)</td>
<td>387.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source) International Diabetes Federation
Strategies for Integrating Health Literacy in the Middle East

- Joint Efforts
- Positive Approach - Not Punitive
- Educational Campaigns
- Assess Risk and Readiness for Change
Strategies for Integrating Health Literacy into Emirates Culture

- Health and HL in All Policies
- **Institutionalize HL** in private practice and clinics
- Inclusion in clinical curriculums (Medical, Nursing Public Health, Nutrition and Dietetics)
- Inclusion in the general education system
- Ongoing Clinical and Service Provider Training - CMEs
Integrating Health Literacy into Emirates Culture

- Create Think Tanks
- Focus on Children, Young Teens
  - Make it Fun and Positive
Integrating Health Literacy into Middle Eastern Culture

Benefits

- Creates a more informed and healthy individual and community
- Promotes increased knowledge and productivity
- Promotes ownership of health condition
- Reduces overutilization and misuse of current services
- Reduces the financial impact/burden of chronic illnesses
THANK YOU!
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References


References


- Obesity and Diabetes Rates Increase in the UAE
