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Title: Nutrition literacy among clients of a health care center

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Abstract: Objective: The joint committee on National Health Education Standards defined “Health Literacy” as “the capacity of individuals to obtain, interpret and understand basic health information and services and the competence to use such information and services in ways which enhance health”. We know that nearly half of American adults lack the necessary health literacy skills needed to understand and act appropriately on health information but, there aren't any documented information about Iranian people. The purpose of this research was to assess the current state of nutrition literacy (knowledge, reading and understanding) among the female clients of a health care center in Yasouj, Iran.

Method: A total of 51 women, referred to a health care center, via a convenience sampling were participated in this study. Health literacy was measured using a nutrition Literacy survey instrument. The questionnaire was prepared to assess the reading and understanding abilities among the readers of a popular health newspaper and validated in a small group. The instrument contained three sections, one for evaluating the medical and health vocabulary, second to measure the perceptions of a printed visual material (nutritional pyramid poster), and the third one to test the reading skills (speed and understanding) of participants.

Result: the mean age and education of the participants were 28.5 and 11.7 years respectively and 75% of them were originally citified. The percents of scores obtained by the participants for vocabulary skills, visual literacy and text perception sections were 55%, 61% and 73% respectively. There were no significant correlations between vocabulary skills of the participants with their education, age and visual literacy levels. The frequency of reading the text by the respondents was 1.1 times with the average time of 1.9 minutes. Furthermore, text perception abilities showed statistical significant correlations with vocabulary (r=.37 & p<0.01) and visual literacy skills (r=.33 & p<0.05).

Conclusion: in spite of appropriate level of participants' education and age, they didn't show a good performance in recognizing the nutritional terms; however they understood a selective topic in a public newspaper in the field of general health, reasonably. The low participants' inference of a published poster messages implies that the rudiments of visual material designing and research in health literacy field as well, need to take into more consideration.

Health literacy, perception, nutrition education

Presentation: Poster