

Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine

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PILOT PROJECT TO TEACH CURRENT AND FUTURE HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS HOW TO ADDRESS PATIENTS WITH HEALTH LITERACY IN MIND

A GEORGIA HEALTH SCIENCES LIBRARY ASSOCIATION INITIATIVE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GEORGIA ALLIANCE FOR HEALTH LITERACY

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Objectives

To develop a program that will improve the ability to identify and communicate effectively with patients at the appropriate level of health literacy.

Methods

A pre-test, presentation, post-test, and online resources intended for health science students, researchers, and clinicians was developed. The pre- and post-tests were the same and were based on content. The presentation consisted of lecture points and active learning to fully engage participants. Small focus groups consisting of researchers and clinicians were held to provide feedback on the assessments, presentation, and online resources.

Results

Focus groups stated that the presentation should have more focus on patient-centered care but that the information would be a useful reminder for practitioners. Suggestions were made to include more images on slides and provide additional videos about methods mentioned in the presentation. Including stories about the benefits of health literacy was recommended as a way to show relevance to everyday practice. Focus group members also provided feedback on active learning that would help improve an attendee's application the information. Revisions were made to all portions of the project so that it can be presented in medical schools and health care settings.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

1 in 6 U.S. adults reads at an elementary level

36% of U.S. adults have limited health literacy

Only 12% of adults have proficient skills to understand basic health information*

Conclusion

The focus groups stated the need for introductory and refresher sessions on health literacy. Training classes will be offered in person for students, researchers, and practicing clinicians at medical schools and in health care settings. Online options will be presented for reference for those who are unable to attend in person training. It is anticipated that the presentation and online resources will help improve communication with patients and increase patient satisfaction.

*Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., & Paulsen, C. (2006). *The health literacy of America's adults: Results from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NCES 2006-483)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.