Time to Act: System mapping and Investing on health literacy from school to elderly, ensuring sustainable health for all

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Abstract

The Shanghai Declaration of 2016 recognizes health literacy as one of the key health promotion pillars for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets.

Low health literacy has been linked to less self-management, lower health status, riskier health behavior, less healthy options, higher expenses, and inappropriate use of health services as reported in many research literatures around the globe.

European countries have evidence that enhancing health literacy could empower citizens through the development of personal and collective knowledge and skills, and the creation of responsive settings, healthy policies and enabling healthy environments.

Indian National Health Policy and Niti Ayog has also emphasized on assessment and development of Population Health Literacy.

Using a health literacy approach to policy making a people-centered effective public health plans and program can be channelized.

Health literacy is individual’s capacity to collect, process, understand and synthesize health information and take health decisions based on its ability.
Methods

For developing Health Literacy, do we need extra resources?

NO!

What we need?

Change in approach.

Collaborate and Activate to deliver Health Literacy Interventions

- Village Health Sanitation & Nutrition Committee
- Education Providers
- Primary Health Care Providers
- Healthcare Industry
- Indian Industries

Apply health literacy interventions

Identify effective health literacy interventions

Follow up with partners for feedback & check health literacy levels

Activate channels of health communication with partners
Figure 1. Implementation frame to achieve effective Health Literacy

Activate channels of health communication with partners

- Print booklets (Manipal Health Literacy Unit Initiated)
  - What to ask a doctor
  - What to eat (local food choice)
  - What are different medical terminologies’
  - What are my medical rights
  - What are my health responsibilities
- Print e-bulletin
- Start YouTube / Social Media Channel (Partner with hospitals)
- Radio talks (Q/A) (Alternate and allopathy medical doctors)
- Digital Health Literacy App
  - Manipal Health Literacy Unit Initiated

*Age 8 years and above is selected as they compete in Olympiad and are able to read and write basics in at least one language.
Figure 2. Literate to Health Literate

Strengthen Health Literacy
- Proactive Government and Non-Government healthcare machinery to empower community health literacy
  - Healthcare organizations empowering patients and relatives on Healthy Literacy
    - Health Literacy in Educational Institutes
      - Health Literate Service & Production industry empowering employees

Find personal health literacy gaps

Interventions for Health Literate Indi

Adequate Literacy Levels
- Ease of assessing self health literacy level in local language
- Adequate availability of health literacy resources
- Verbal health communication
- Visual health communication

After adequate Health Literacy Interventions
- My doctor said, I need to monitor my blood glucose levels every three months
- To be healthy, I should start with walking and yoga, I will eat home made healthy food
- I will monitor my temperature and if temperature goes above 100°F, I will go to doctor
- Now I understand all health information, I can decide which is false health information
Figure 3. Impact of Health Literacy Implementation Program in Country

**Primary Impact**
1. Decrease in outpatient load in neighboring tertiary care hospitals
2. Increase in targeted group practicing healthy lifestyle
3. Targeted group’s assessment shows health literate

**Secondary Impact**
1. Reduced number of sick leaves by the employees
2. Improvement in various health indicators
3. Reduction in sickness episodes due to avoidable causes
4. Economic growth
Conclusion

- System Analysis to achieve SDG 3: Good health and well being can be routed through development of Population Health Literacy.
- Health Literacy Interventions targeted approach has capacity to bring down the per person spending on healthcare.
- Health Literacy Interventions can bring down the additional load on healthcare delivery system.
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