

HEALTH LITERACY AND ITS INFLUENCING FACTORS AMONG ADULTS IN THE SUBURBAN AREAS OF WUHAN, CHINA

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Abstract. Health literacy (HL), defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services, may influence behavior affecting health. In this study, we aimed to determine the level of HL and factors associated with that level in order to inform programs to increase HL in the study population. Study subjects were selected randomly from those attending 4 community health service centers in Wuhan, China. This study consisted of 2 parts: a quantitative part that included all study subjects and consisted of the subjected filling out a questionnaire and a qualitative part consisting of an interview. A total of 2,475 subjects were included in the study; 53.8% female. The mean [\pm standard deviation (SD)] age of study subjects was 36.8 (\pm 17.8) years. A total of 406 (16.4%) subjects had adequate HL. Factors significantly associated with having adequate HL were: female (female *vs* male, OR=1.851, 95% CI:1.433-2.390); 18-34 years old (35-64 *vs* 18-34 years old, OR=0.303, 95% CI:0.282-0.456); \geq 65 *vs* 18-34 years old, OR=0.625, 95% CI:0.455-0.859); high school and above (high school *vs* primary school or below, OR=5.380, 95% CI:2.220-13.041; college or above *vs* primary school or below, OR=6.217, 95% CI:2.683-14.406); public servants or technicians (public servants or technicians *vs* workers or farmers, OR=1.879, 95% CI:1.316-2.683); household per capital income between 3,000 and 4,999(¥3,000-4,999 *vs* \leq ¥1,000, OR=1.595, 95% CI:1.015-2.507); source of income being their own job (family or relatives *vs* own job, OR=2.244, 95% CI:1.155-4.358) and have health self-management awareness (no health self-management awareness *vs* health self-management awareness, OR=0.645, 95% CI:0.439-0.948). For the qualitative interview part of the study, 10 subjects were interviewed; 6 males. The mean \pm SD of subjects was 45.1 (\pm 14.8) years. Sixty percent of the qualitative interview subjects felt adequate HL was important for having good health and 70% felt having an inadequate education about health self-management awareness was associated with poor health. In summay, few study subjects had adequate HL. Many factors were associated with adequate HL. Education programs to improve HL need to include these factors for improving HL in the study population.

Keywords: health literacy, suburban areas, knowledge, associated factor

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