

Center for Health Literacy Promotion

Research Summary

Does Home Visitation Promote Maternal Health Literacy?

Project Description

This project evaluates home visitation as a channel for promoting maternal health literacy. The intervention aimed to enable mothers to use information and services in ways that promote personal and child health and so to exert greater control over family health and its determinants. In this action research project, six home visitation programs and one telephonic service implemented the [Beginnings Guides Life Skills Development Curriculum](#) to promote maternal health literacy among disadvantaged mothers during the prenatal to preschool period (N = 2572 parent/child dyads, nearly all mothers). We validate measures of maternal health literacy derived from the Life Skills Progression ([LSP](#)) instrument.

Maternal Health Literacy: cognitive and social skills that determine the motivation and ability of mothers to gain access to, understand, and use information in ways that promote and maintain their health and that of their children. (Renkert and Nutbeam 2001)

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For more information [Sandra Smith](#)

Key Findings

- Overall parents achieved significant improvement in health literacy scores after 12-18 months in home visitation.
- Estimated reading level at baseline predicted entry level health literacy scores, but did not predict who progressed or how much.
- Lower functioning parents and those with lower estimated reading level achieved the greatest gains.
- The [LSP Healthcare Literacy Scale](#) uses 9 LSP items to rate parents' use of adult and child health information and services. The [Selfcare Literacy Scale](#) uses 7 LSP items to rate parents' management of personal and child health at home. These scales show good face and internal validity, strong inter-rater reliability, test-retest reliability and criterion validity. Sequential measures show progress over time. The LSP can be used to estimate maternal health literacy.

Publications

Smith, S. A. (2009). [Promoting Health Literacy Concept, Measurement & Intervention](#). Literacy, 170. Dissertation. Union Institute and University.

Presentations

Evaluation of a Health Promotion Model Health Literacy Intervention
[Health Literacy Annual Research Conference](#)
November 19, 2010
Bethesda, MD

Theoretical Framework for Promoting & Measuring Health Literacy as an Asset
Scientific [poster](#) presentation
Health Literacy Annual Research Conference
Washington, DC November 19, 2009

Measuring the Function in Functional Health Literacy
Institute of Medicine Round Table on Health Literacy
Workshop on Health Literacy Measurement
Washington, DC February 19, 2009
iom.edu/activities/publichealth/healthliteracy/2009-FEB-26.aspx

Focus on Function in Health Literacy
Plenary Session
American College of Physicians & Institute of Medicine
National Conference on New Directions in Health Literacy
Washington, DC November 26, 2008
http://www.acpfoundation.org/docs/conferences/2008%20files/hcc2008_exsum.pdf
starts on p10.

Health Literacy & Home Visitation
Association of Maternal Child Health Programs
Washington, DC February, 2008

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