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A Journey Through Health Literacy: From Preschoolers to Prisoners, Part One

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The healthcare system is complex and can be overwhelming to consumers. Health Literacy (HL) is defined by Ayaz-Alkaya & Terzi (2019, p.31) as “an individual’s cognitive, and social skills related to access, understanding, and use of health information in order to protect and promote health”. Nurses play an integral role in assisting patients to make informed choices and healthcare decisions both in and out of the acute care setting. The rate of individuals with sufficient HL in the United States was 12%, with rates being unchanged since 2013. Ayzaz-Alkaya & Terzi (2019) found that persons were less likely to focus on preventative health and more non-adherence to medication and treatment regimens. HL is particularly important for students to obtain in their nursing school curriculum in order to effectively communicate health information with those at-risk patients. McLeary-Jones (2012) found that nursing students developed greater knowledge when HL was implemented into the nursing curriculum.

Health literacy was incorporated into the theory section of a senior baccalaureate nursing course in 2012. Subsequently, a health fair activity was incorporated into the clinical component of the course in 2013 as a solution to address the lack of available community clinical sites (Bouchard & Swan, 2017). Senior nursing students use a three-fold body systems-based approach, anatomy and physiology, chronic diseases and health conditions, and health promotion including handouts in community-based settings. Students are responsible for the development of an outline and three learner objectives. Faculty provide resources for students to develop the outline in a designated content area within the course located in the University’s learning management system. Also, handouts are selected from the learning management, with consideration for appropriate health literacy levels for the respective populations.

Upon completion, faculty signs off on the outline prior to the health fair. In the scope of the activity the students are tasked with translating the same topic incorporating appropriate level of health literacy for inmates in a minimum, medium, or maximum prison setting and Title 1, four (4) year old, preschool students. Students complete a reflective journal following the activities. Qualitative data has been collected and findings will be provided in the presentation. Lessons learned including student feedback, was incorporated into subsequent health fair activities.

Title:

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Keywords:

Health Literacy, Health Promotion and Nursing Students

References:

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Abstract Summary:

This presentation will discuss incorporating health literacy in a nursing curriculum as a method to employ techniques to translate health promotion topics from preschoolers to prisoners. Undergraduate senior nursing students play a key role in the education of vulnerable populations through health promotion education activities in health fair settings.

Content Outline:

1. Definition of Health Literacy (HL).

From World Health Organization (WHO) and articles.

2. Current United States statistics on HL.
WHO statistics.
3. Social Determinants of Health.
4. Healthy People 2020 goals.
5. Key data on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Goals 3 & 4.
6. Review of Current Literature for past 5 years.
7. Why is health literacy important to nursing students?
Improved patient outcomes.
Better communication skills.
Promote quality health care.
8. Importance of Health Literacy among Preschoolers.
9. Importance of Health Literacy among Prisoners.
Current HL and Prisoner statistics.
10. Background of Health Fair Project.
Idea to Fruition.
11. How subjects were obtained at both sites.
At-Risk Title 1 rural Preschool.
Federal Prison.
12. Set-up & Logistics of Health Fairs.
Placement of Stations and rotations.
Teaching topics. A three-fold body systems-based approach, Anatomy & Physiology, Chronic Diseases and health conditions, Health promotion including handouts.
13. Qualitative statements from senior baccalaureate nursing students.
14. Future Projects. Part 2.
Future health fairs with vulnerable populations.

First Primary Presenting Author

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Author Summary: Terri currently serves as nursing faculty for Indiana State University. Terri is a former hospice nurse and as a floor nurse in the Veterans Administration system. Terri is a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society, American Nurses Association (ANA), and the Indiana State Nurses Association (ISNA). Terri has a Masters in Nursing Education and Nursing Administration. Terri's future plans include to pursue a DNP.

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