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EVALUATION OF HEALTH LITERACY AMONG OUT PATIENTS VISITING A PRIVATE DENTAL INSTITUTION IN CHENNAI.

AKSHETHA.L.S
Department of Public Health Dentistry
Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals,
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical sciences,
Saveetha university, Chennai.
Email Id:akshethaloganathan@gmail.com

Dr. D.Sri Sakthi
Reader
Department of Public Health Dentistry
Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals,
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Science,
Saveetha University, Chennai.
Email Id:srisakthi@saveetha.com

Dr. D.Sri Sakthi
Department of Public Health Dentistry
Saveetha Dental College and Hospitals,
Saveetha Institute of Medical and Technical Science,
Saveetha University, Chennai.
Velappanchavadi,
Chennai-600077.
Tamil nadu, India.
Phone: 8122399966
Email Id:srisakthi@saveetha.com

ABSTRACT:

BACKGROUND: Health literacy is found to be a strong predictor of an individual's health behaviour.World Health Organization considered health literacy as the important determinant factor to promote public health.

AIM: The aim of this study is to evaluate the health literacy among outpatients visiting a private dental institution, and to examine the education level of the participants and health literacy level.

METHODS: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted through google forms. A questionnaire which contained 11 questions was circulated through an online platform via google docs among the outpatients. At the end of the survey, all the data were collected and tabulated.The frequency and percentage

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were calculated and the data is being analyzed by using Chi square analysis. The Chi square analysis was done by using the IBM SPSS software version 23.

RESULT: Final analysis was done by the responses from the 75 outpatients.The selected patients have good health literacy levels.Moreover, there is association between the level of education and health literacy level.

CONCLUSION: In summary the health literacy among outpatients was good and it was associated with the general level of literacy. This study provides knowledge that can be applied to evolve schemes to encourage the health literacy level among outpatients.

KEY WORDS: Education level, Health literacy, Outpatients, innovative mode, innovative analysis

INTRODUCTION:

Health literacy is the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and to make appropriate health decisions. Health literacy requires a group of reading, listening, analytical and decision making skills(1).Health care providers and patients play an important role in health literacy.Specific skills needed to navigate the healthcare system and the importance of clear communication between healthcare providers and their patients.The role in promoting health literacy must be incorporated in every patient's plan of care.

They need the providers who speak their language so they can make health care choices(2). People need information which they can understand and use to make the best decisions for their health. Health literacy can help us prevent health problems and protect our health and to manage those problems.When organizations give health information, it has often been found to be difficult to understand creating a health literacy problem.To avoid these problems provide information and use it most effectively with the skills(3).

Health literacy is important for everyone; it helps us to prevent diseases.Agency for Health Research and Quality funded researchers developed a variety of tools to measure health literacy.Health literacy tool shed is used for measuring health literacy(4). The literacy rate can be defined by the percentage of population of a given age group. Often health literacy has been regarded as a silent epidemic.Concerns about low levels of health literacy led to search for methods and instruments to screen a patient's health literacy skills.Low health literacy has led to increased rates of hospitalization and emergency department visits(5).Most healthcare providers cannot recognize their patients have poor health literacy. Improved health literacy is

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necessary for people to increase control over their health. Our team has extensive knowledge and research experience that has translated into high quality publications(6–25)The aim of the study was to evaluate the health literacy level among the out patients in a private dental institution in Chennai.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

STUDY DESIGN: A cross sectional questionnaire survey

STUDY SETTING:Outpatients in a private dental institution in Chennai

SAMPLE SIZE:75 outpatients

SAMPLING AND SCHEDULING:Owing to the nature of the study design and setting, a convenience sampling method was used. The data was collected over a period of one month.

SURVEY AND SCHEDULING:Owing to the study design and setting, a convenience sampling method was used. And the data was collected over a period of one month.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT: A pre tested and validated questionnaire was used to measure the baseline knowledge, attitude regarding the health literacy level

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA: All those who were willing to participate were included in the study. Those who were not willing and those who had a language barrier in answering the english version of the questionnaire were excluded from the study.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE: Prior to the start of the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the institution ethical committee of Saveetha university.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS:The responses from the google sheet was transferred into an excel and was then exported to SPSS software, version 25. Descriptive statistics was done using frequency and percentage. Inferential statistics was done using Chi square test test. Interpretation was based on a p value less than 0.05, which was considered statistically

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Significant. Comparisons were done between variables like age ,gender and knowledge, attitude practice responses by the participants.

RESULTS:

The cross sectional questionnaire study was answered by 75 people. Among 75 participants, 32% were male participants and the remaining 68% were female participants. The study population consisted of 34.67% of participants belong to 30-40 age group , 32% of people belong to 40-50 age group, 18.67% of people belong to 20-30 age group, 8% of people belong to 10-20 age group, 6.67% of people belong to 50-60 age group. 44% of the study population understood the information given by health care providers while 56% people did not understand the information the health care providers. 34.67% of the study population have sufficient information to manage their health . of people are sure about their information, 33.33% of people having enough information, 32% of people have more information.

The study population actively manages their health. 41.33% of people make plans about what to do, 18.67% of people do regular things, 24% of people set their own goals, 16% of people spend a lot of time managing. The study population about their social support for health is 54.67% and 45.33% of people say no about their social support for health.The study population about the appraisal of health information is 48% and 52% of people are not sure about the appraisal of health information.The study population about the ability to actively engage with health care providers 56% of people and 44% are not engaging with health care providers.The Study population 45.33% are navigating their health care system.54.67% of people are not navigating the healthcare system. The study population 56% has the ability to find good health information and 44% of people don't have ability to find good health information. The study population has 58.67% understanding health information well enough and 41.33% have no understanding information.

The p value between age and well enough information to manage the health is 0.492. The p value between age and understanding the health information is 0.487. The p value between the age and ability to engage with the health care providers is 0.46. The p value between level of education and ability to find good health information is 0.860. The p value between the age and supported by the health care providers is 0.647.

DISCUSSION:

A little knowledge is available about health literacy among outpatients in chennai. This study was carried out with an attempt to get a complete picture regarding health literacy from outpatients of a dental institution in chennai. The overall findings of this research assessed that the participants have enough literacy levels.It found that the majority of the patients are female (32%).

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The study people mostly belong to the age group 30-40(26). It found that the majority of outpatients feel that they are understood and supported by the healthcare providers (56%). And most of the people are sure about all the information to manage their health (34.67%). Most of the people make plans to manage their health (41.63%).There is so much social support for health (54.67%).

The appraisal health information is not sure (52%).The out patients are actively engaging with their healthcare providers (56%).The out patients are not sure about navigating the healthcare system (54.67%).The out patients don't have the ability to find good health information (56%). The outpatients are mostly professional degree (25.33%) and also degree (25.33%).

In the present study, there is association between the age and the understanding and supported by the health care providers The p value is not significant(27).Association between age and sufficient information to manage the health.The p value is not significant. Association between the age and understanding health information well enough to know.The p value is significant(28). Association between the gender and understanding and supported by the health care providers. The p value is not significant.Association between the level of education and understanding the health information well enough to know.The p value is significant.(27)

The current study revealed that there is some relationship between the age and level of health literacy among the out patients.Limited sample size limits the generalization that can be made from the study.

CONCLUSION:

Within the limitations of our study, the participants were found to have good health literacy levels.There remain many opportunities for conducting further research to gain better insight of health literacy.Among community dwelling older adults inadequately associated with poorer physical and mental health.

Author contributions:

Akshetha.L.S - Study design, Data collection, Data analysis, Manuscript writing.

Sri Sakthi D - Study concept, Data verification, Data analysis, Manuscript writing and correction.

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Conflict of interest:

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