

Health Literacy



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To maintain their own health and the health of their families and communities, consumers rely heavily on the health information that is available to them. This information is at the core of the partnerships that patients and their families forge with today's complex modern health systems. This information may be provided in a variety of forms - ranging from a discussion between a patient and a health care provider to a health promotion advertisement, a consent form, or one of many other forms of health communication common in our society. Yet millions of Americans cannot understand or act upon this information. To address this problem, the field of health literacy brings together research and practice from diverse fields including education, health services, and social and cultural sciences, and the many organizations whose actions can improve or impede health literacy. "Health Literacy: Prescription to End Confusion" examines the body of knowledge that applies to the field of health literacy, and recommends actions to promote a health literate society. By examining the extent of limited health literacy and the ways to improve it, we can improve the health of individuals and populations.

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