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From Knowledge to Action: The Role of Medical Students in Advancing Health Literacy

The New York City Health Literacy Fellowship
Second Annual Conference

November 30th 2007
4:00pm
Smilow Auditorium
NYU School of Medicine

PROGRAM & INFORMATION



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**The Health Literacy Fellowship Conference
is co-sponsored by
The Mayor's Office of Adult Education
and the
Associated Medical Schools of New York.**



Abstracts

Fellow: Rebecca Lapat

Medical School: Mt. Sinai School of Medicine

Adult Literacy Placement: Brooklyn Adult Learning Center

Project Title: Implementing a Teach-Back Health Literacy Curriculum for Adult Learners

Abstract: *Background:* The teach-back technique has been shown to increase patient comprehension and retention of health information. It is hypothesized that a methodology that is a combination of teach-back and project-based learning where students create health education media can increase health literacy skills. *Methods:* Adult Basic Education (ABE) students were taught 8 hours of GED level diabetes lesson plans. Using the video medium for teach-back, students were then randomly assigned to project groups of 5-6 students each and created 5-minute diabetes educational videos based upon the information they had been taught. A multiple choice/short answer pretest and posttest assessed student knowledge on the topic of diabetes, impact of the teach-back project, and provided a format for students to express their impressions of the health literacy component of their coursework. *Results:* The pretest was administered to 50 ABE students, where the mean score was 57%. The posttest was administered to 27 ABE students, where the mean score was 76%. In written feedback, the majority of students felt the health literacy classes were relevant and useful. *Conclusions:* Video media is a viable and useful format for increasing knowledge and understanding of health topic areas for adult learners.

Program

Registration & Reception

Opening Remarks

*Dr. Mariano Jose Rey, Dean for Community Health Affairs
NYU School of Medicine*

Welcome

*Anthony Tassi, Executive Director of Adult Education
Office of the Mayor*

Film Screening:

“Making of the Fellowship”

*Darren Methlie, Writer & Director
City University of New York*

Showcase of Research

The 2007 Health Literacy Fellows

Initial Findings: Fellowship Evaluation

*Paul Kim, Educational Evaluation Consultant
Office of the Mayor*

Concluding Remarks

*Jo Weiderhorn, Executive Director
Associated Medical Schools of New York*

Health Literacy

Is the ability of individuals to read, to understand, and to act upon health-related information. It also refers to the capacity of professionals and institutions to communicate effectively so that community members can make informed decisions and take appropriate actions to protect and promote their health.

The Health Literacy Fellowship is a unique opportunity for a limited number of first and second year medical students to spend a summer in a community-based setting experiencing first-hand how adults learn about health and apply medical advice in their real lives. Fellows are matched with adult education programs across the City where they work as teaching assistants and implement health literacy projects. Each fellow writes a paper to advance the current state of knowledge and practice related to health literacy.

The annual Health Literacy Conference is an opportunity for fellows to present the findings of their summer projects to a distinguished audience of medical school faculty and staff, health care providers and researchers, other experts in health literacy, and their peers.

Fellows' projects explored everything from teaching methods to learning styles and from validating survey tools to developing new assessment methods. The projects contribute to the growing body of health literacy research and practice and give fellows an opportunity for conference presentations and publications.

Abstracts

Fellows: Imrana Ahmed, Rachael Bedard, Annery Garcia, Julie Gonzalez, Kaili Stevens

Medical School: DesMoines University, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons, SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

Adult Literacy Placement: Mayor's Office of Adult Education, Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center, Fifth Avenue Committee, West Farms Career & Technology Center, Manhattan BEGIN

Project Title: The Plain Language Project: Assessing the Usability of Patient Information Documents.

Abstract: *Background:* The average American adult reads at an 8th grade level. However most patient information documents are written at the 11th grade reading level. While improving the readability of health related materials is essential, the suitability of documents must be examined as well. *Methods:* 18 documents were collected from a convenience sample of New York City hospitals & clinics. 10 were colonoscopy preparation documents and 8 were diabetes self management documents. Each document was assessed for readability and suitability using the Fry formula and SAM metric respectively. Focus groups with adult learners were conducted to determine if the user audience understood the goals and instructions of each document. *Results:* 38% of documents were written at or above a 9th grade level; 56% between 6th and 8th grade levels; 6% below 5th grade reading level. With respect to usability, 11% of documents were rated as "not suitable" overall; 61% as "adequate"; and 28% as "superior." *Conclusion:* Assessing documents with common readability and suitability tools can help health care providers identify areas for improvement in written communication.

Abstracts

Fellow: Sarah Hodulik

Medical School: SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

Adult Literacy Placement: Turning Point Educational Center

Project Title: Health Literacy in the ESOL Classroom: Addressing Barriers Immigrants Face in Accessing Healthcare.

Abstract: *Background:* It is well documented that immigrants underutilize the American healthcare system. Several possible explanations include lack of health insurance, inability to pay for care, fear of language barriers, and mistrust or disbelief in the American system. *Methods:* We led focus groups and personal interviews to determine barriers to healthcare for ESOL students in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. We administered health literacy curriculum that included exercises on talking to a doctor, filling out medical history forms, and taking medication. We conducted a post-test to evaluate if barriers had been addressed. *Results:* Primary barriers were language and finances. Students felt health literacy lessons increased their level of comfort with medical and health related vocabulary but did not address the financial barriers associated with their lack of access to health care. *Conclusions:* Health literacy in an ESOL classroom can address the language barrier to healthcare that immigrants face. More research is necessary to determine if building health literacy skills can empower immigrants to overcome other barriers preventing their access to healthcare.

Speakers

Mariano Jose Rey, MD is the Director of the Institute for Community Health and Research as well as the Senior Associate Dean for Community Health Affairs at the NYU School of Medicine. Within the Institute, Dr. Rey is the Principal Investigator of the National Institute of Health (NIH) P 60-funded Center for the Study of Asian American Health and the NCMHD-supported R24 Project AsPIRE on cardiovascular disease and hypertension. He is also the Administrative Principal Investigator of the New York City Hepatitis B Program, a public health initiative that has become a national model. Dr. Rey is one of the founding faculty members of the NYU's Institute for Urban and Global Health and was its Executive Director from 2001 to 2003. Dr. Rey has published numerous articles and book chapters in his fields of cardiology and cardiovascular physiology, of health disparities and international health, and of medical education and its interaction with the humanities.

Anthony Tassi is the Executive Director of the Mayor's Office of Adult Education, an office established in 2006 to create better outcomes for the City's adult education system. Previously, he served as the Health Policy Advisor to the Deputy Mayor for Policy and represented the Office of the Mayor on the Boards of Directors of the New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation and the Primary Care Development Corporation.

Paul Kim is an independent consultant working for the Mayor's Office of Adult Education. He is an expert program evaluator and seasoned policy analyst. Mr. Kim's professional experience includes a Peace Corps tenure in Slovakia, the World Bank, Open Society Foundation, United Board, and the National Academy for Excellent Teaching. Prior to working for the Mayor's Office, he was part of the education research team at International Baccalaureate.

Darren Methlie is writer, director, editor, and cinematographer of documentary and fiction films. His most recent film is the Health Literacy Fellowship documentary. At the 2007 Citivisions Film Festival, Mr. Methlie's short film, "Plain Jane," received the faculty award and best fiction film accolades. Mr. Methlie is a graduate of the CUNY MFA Program at City College.

Speakers

Jo Wiederhorn has served since 2002 as Executive Director of the Associated Medical Schools of New York (AMSNY)—an organization that represents New York State’s 15 medical schools and 5 academic dental centers. Under her tenure the organization has successfully advocated for funding for: the placement of medical students in school based health centers; a program that provides a year of post-baccalaureate training for students to ensure their success in medical school; and a program that matches basic science students with NIH-funded researchers. Previously, Ms. Wiederhorn worked for the New York City Health & Hospitals Corporation (HHC), where she initially served as Chief of Staff to the President and then became Associate Executive Director of MetroPlus—HHC’s Medicaid Managed Care Plan. Ms. Wiederhorn also served as Chief of Staff for the Dean at NYU School of Medicine. While there, she was one of the founders of the NYU School of Medicine Institute for Urban and Global Health.

Abstracts

Fellow: Susan Lien

Medical School: Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education

Adult Literacy Placement: HANAC Begin

Project Title: Examining Health Literacy in the Context of Adult Education Critical Pedagogy

Abstract: Critical pedagogy is teaching theory that provides culturally relevant, participant driven, and socially empowering curriculum to adult learners. It is based in the work of Paulo Freire and attempts to address literacy skills within a framework of social activism. Health is a generative subject; it is an issue of great importance to one’s everyday life and can affect one’s ability to function in society. Therefore, health literacy may be taught using critical pedagogy. This presentation is an introduction to critical pedagogy, its history, examples of its use, and how it can be used to address health literacy in the adult education classroom to address the goal of enabling adult learners to take control of their own health.

Abstracts

Fellow: Wilnise Jasmin

Medical School: SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

Adult Literacy Placement: CAMBA

Project Title: Introduction of Electronic Health Literacy into an Adult Basic Education Classroom

Abstract: *Background:* A growing number of patients are utilizing the internet for information about medical conditions and treatment options, yet online health information materials are inaccessible to patients with low literacy. The Adult Basic Education (ABE) classroom is a good setting for building electronic health literacy (eHealth literacy) skills. Computer literacy is a necessary first step to help individuals seek, find, understand, and appraise health information from electronic sources. *Methods:* ABE students received a lesson designed to increase computer literacy. The lesson used health information websites to cover the internet skills module. A post test was administered to evaluate students' abilities to find and understand health information. *Results:* All of the student participants answered at least 2 of the 3 knowledge-based post test questions correctly. Almost 40% of students exhibited comprehension of the online health information. *Conclusions:* The incorporation of a computer and Internet skills lesson can serve as a good starting point for gaining the skill set necessary to be eHealth literate. Further research is necessary to determine if eHealth literacy can improve health outcomes through individuals' greater involvement in their own health care.

Conference Organizers

Crystal Mainiero

**Director of Administration & Government Relations
Associated Medical Schools of New York**

Fatima Ashraf

**Health Literacy Coordinator
Office of the Mayor**

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**Urban Fellow 2007-2008
Office of the Mayor**

Minerva Figueroa

**Institute of Community Health
New York University School of Medicine**

Gino Dalesandro

**Head Chef, Culinary Arts Program
Ready, Willing, & Able
The DOE Fund**

Health Literacy Fellows '07

Imrana Ahmed
DesMoines University
Summer Placement: Mayor's Office of Adult Education

Rachael Bedard
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Summer Placement: Mid-Manhattan Adult Learning Center

Annery Garcia
Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education
Summer Placement: Fifth Avenue Committee

Katharine Goheen
Weil Cornell Medical College
Summer Placement: Queens Library

Julie Gonzalez
Columbia University College of Physicians & Surgeons
Summer Placement: West Farms Career & Technology Center, Phipps CDC

Rebecca Green
Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Summer Placement: Brooklyn Adult Learning Center

Sarah Hodulik
SUNY Downstate College of Medicine
Summer Placement: Turning Point Educational Center

Wilnise Jasmin
SUNY Downstate College of Medicine
Summer Placement: CAMBA

Susan Lien
Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education
Summer Placement: HANAC BEGIN

Kaili Stevens
SUNY Downstate College of Medicine
Summer Placement: Manhattan BEGIN

Abstracts

Fellow: Katharine Goheen

Medical School: Weil Cornell Medical College

Adult Literacy Placement: Queens Library

Project Title: The Development of a Pictorial Health-Related Quality of Life Survey for Adults with Limited Literacy

Abstract: *Background:* Interventions to improve health literacy are increasingly popular. Although these interventions are often assessed by the change in participants' knowledge, changes in health status and health outcomes are more meaningful. Health-related quality of life (HRQoL) is an accepted measure of health. HRQoL has been difficult to measure in low-literacy patients. A talking touch screen version of the SF-36, the standard HRQoL survey, has proven successful, but such technology is hard to come by. A pictorial survey would allow HRQoL to be easily measured in low-literacy adults. *Methods:* We worked with English-speaking low-literacy adults in the Queens Public Library system to develop pictures associated with selected questions from the SF-36. Low literacy participants were identified by reading level below the 7th grade, as measured by the TABE. We administered a control written survey and gave the new pictorial survey (self-administered) to 9 participants in random order on 2 days in consecutive weeks. We analyzed the results for agreement between the two versions of the test. *Results:* We found a moderately high degree of agreement between the pictorial version and the control. *Conclusions:* The pictorial survey offers a new way to evaluate the success of health literacy interventions, moving beyond facts learned to a measurement of participants' health.