

## Utilizing technology in health literacy to advance patient-doctor communication for better health outcomes

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### Abstract

The paper explores the dynamic connection between patients and doctors, emphasizing the crucial importance of technology utilization, medical knowledge and the need for a two-way communication into cognizance – all in a bid to promote favorable health outcomes amongst individuals. Over time, it has always been a no-brainer for health practitioners to assume a position of authority in a one-way flow of communication with patients, passing information conclusions regarding their patients without consulting them. On the other hand, collaborative decision-making and patient empowerment are prioritized in modern healthcare models. The study emphasizes the value of health comprehension, which enables people to successfully understand and apply critical health information. It investigates the relationship between enhanced patient satisfaction and better health outcomes and patient-centered participation and cooperative decision-making. Research indicates that individuals possessing sufficient knowledge about health exhibit greater contentment with medical treatments and engage actively in the decision-making procedures. In its conclusion, it makes the case for a patient-centered care philosophy that is holistic in nature, highlighting the moral underpinnings of medicine as well as the changing goals of a highly developed and customer-focused healthcare system.

**Keywords:** Communication; Patient; Literacy; Health

### 1. Introduction

Throughout history, the medical field has been widely regarded as one of the most esteemed professions. Physicians were revered and regarded as possessing celestial qualities. Their recommendations were unquestioningly recognized as authoritative. Doctors rarely provided explanations for their healthcare choices as well as certainly did not concern individual in loop of making a judgement. A significant number of patients did not anticipate a fair and impartial connection and readily accepted their doctors' suggestions without any hesitation (Dopelt et al., 2021).

The need of providing healthcare in a manner that empowers individuals to comprehend and act upon vital health information in order to make healthcare decisions is increasing. This is because numerous studies indicate a deficiency in health literacy skills among significant portions of numbers in Europe and the US, resulting in unfavorable consequences such as limited compliance with medication regimens, inadequate self-management abilities, and increased rates of hospitalizations as well as emergency care utilization (Altin and Stock, 2016).

Physician-patient relationships have evolved over time. The paternalistic approach to medical treatment, which involves making decisions for patients without their input, has faced criticism. This criticism, together with the implementation of laws that protect privileges of patients, has led to a theoretic change as well as development of rather

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less popular method involving care that is patient focused. The method places recipients and their issues and desires as the primary emphasis of the encounter (Rawson and Moretz, 2016).

Health literacy is a vital aspect of today's healthcare landscape. It plays a pivotal role in advancing patient-doctor communication and fostering positive health outcomes. This article delves into the significance of health literacy. The study examines the effect of patient-focused interaction and collaborative decisions on how satisfied individuals are towards the help they receive (Altin and Stock, 2016).

The role of information technology in the healthcare sector has gained rapid growth during the recent years along with the technology advancements which have helped people to access, understand, and use their health information (Davis et al., 2002). Health-based information has now been made easily accessible and more widespread as a result of great numbers of digital platforms and devices (Fox & Maeve Duggan, 2013).

Information Technology has enabled a new world where health information is heavily shared and accessed, profoundly affecting health communication and deciphering. This article argues about the use of information technology in health care service and how their influence in increasing health communication and literacy. Technology has not only increased the access span of health information but also spurred health literacy and better communication between patients and providers. Without a doubt, it can be done through the use of different technological tools and platforms, including but not limited to websites, mobile applications, social media, and telemedicine. Along with the hurdles and opportunities associated with the integration of IT in health communication, the article also proposes approaches that will guarantee technology is made to work towards abridging the literacy gap among people and health outcomes.

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## 2. Understanding Health Literacy

Health awareness pertains to the level at which individuals possess the ability to obtain, evaluate, and understand essential health information and resources that are crucial for making well-informed decisions regarding their health. It encompasses a range of expertise, including reading, writing, numeracy, communication, and, increasingly, digital literacy.

Health literacy is not merely about an individual's abilities, it also depends on the complications as well as functionality of the information and solutions provided regarding health. The importance of health literacy lies in its close connection with health outcomes. It influences patient's ability to manage health conditions, make informed health decisions, engage in self-care activities, and navigate system of health as well as care (Brach et al., 2014).

Health literacy has been significantly impacted by the incorporation of information technology. According to Davis et al. (2002), it is the capacity to access, comprehend, and use health information in order to make educated choices about one's own well-being. The proliferation of trustworthy health information on digital platforms has increased people's health literacy, which in turn has helped them better understand and manage the healthcare system's intricacies and make positive lifestyle changes.

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## 3. Health Literacy and Technology

Information Technology fulfills a meaningful role in Health Literacy, as shown by the results of the research. For people with low health literacy, whatever outcomes they have are very likely to be low. Their health will be very poor. Through electronic devices that Health Information Technology (HIT) allows, like wearable technology and mobile apps (Mackert et al., 2016), patients have the opportunity receive health information with increased ease. The higher the health levels and the greater the accessibility of technology devices are, the more likely such individuals are to use the internet for health-related needs. It has been observed that the patients that have less health literacy do not use HIT tools as much as the others do, or even think them as easy or useful but they would rather have the privacy of information than anything. Consistent with this, people with higher health literacy also exhibit greater perceived ease of use and usefulness while using applications of HIT (Mackert et al., 2016).

In addition, health literacy is an indicator of trust placed on various systems, where higher health literacy rate tends to decrease the privacy perceptions for HIT tools but have different trust score for government, media, technology companies, and healthcare providers. Logic instrumental in comprehension of the relationship between health literacy and HIT app adoption and usage is a key prerequisite to guarantee that all the users are entitled to reap benefits of technological innovations and we protect health information privacy and promote the trust in healthcare systems and

providers (Institute of Medicine et al., 2011). This emphasizes the need for more research to comprehend role of health literacy in adoption and utilization of HIT tools by populations and better health out results.

Moreover, the interactive features like multimedia contents, interactive tutorials and virtual simulations are effective in the understanding and holding of health information and do this by taking into consideration different styles of learning and preferences (Norman and Skinner, 2006). Mobile health apps incorporate gamification and behavioral nudges for health education, custom treatment regimens and motivate adherence to them.

Consequently, I.T. is not the perfect tool for health communication and literacy despite the health benefits it carries; some problems remain. The digital gap, i.e. an unequal distribution of technology and the Internet, contributes to health inequalities as it makes it difficult to spread digital health interventions in some disadvantaged populations. Aside from that, it is worth noting that the spread of misinformation, as well as inaccurate health content across the internet, might lead to health problems globally (Fox & Maeve Duggan, 2013), implying the significance of critical health literacy skills, which help assess online sources' reliability.

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#### **4. Importance of Patient-focused Engagement**

In healthcare context, communication is a two-way process involving both the healthcare provider and the patient. Patient-centered communication, a vital aspect of this process, care that prioritizes the patient is characterized by a respectful and responsive approach that takes into account the individual patient's choices, requirements, and values.

Ensuring communication that is patient-focused means that all clinical decisions are guided by the values of the patient. Health care companies and their staff must actively participate in a collaborative relationship between patients and physicians, with a specific emphasis on the patient's preferences and values. Effective communication has a crucial role in delivering excellent healthcare and is linked to enhance patient happiness, improved health results, and reduced healthcare expenses (Altin and Stock, 2016).

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#### **5. Health Literacy and Patient Satisfaction**

The extent of a patient's health literacy can greatly impact how happy they are with the quality of care they receive. Patients who possess adequate health literacy abilities are more inclined to comprehend their health situation, efficiently handle their healthcare, and actively participate in communication that prioritizes patients and collaborative decision-making (Toolkit Guide).

Studies indicate that patients who possess sufficient knowledge regarding health literacy are more inclined to express satisfaction with the healthcare they receive in general practice, as opposed to individuals with insufficient health literacy abilities. The happiness arises not only from their capacity to comprehend written material pertaining to their health condition, but also from their involvement in collaborative decisions and communication that prioritizes patients (Altin and Stock, 2016).

Collaboration in decision-making is one area that needs to be strengthened. This is a cooperative process where healthcare providers and patients collaborate and use the most reliable evidence to make informed decisions about healthcare. This procedure acknowledges and addresses the patient's tastes and values, enabling the patient to actively participate in their healthcare.

This can enhance the healthcare experience for patients, leading to better patient satisfaction, improved health outcomes, and potentially, more efficient use of healthcare resources (Aboumatar et al., 2013).

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#### **6. Empowering Patients through Health Literacy**

Health literacy enables consumers to comprehend and effectively utilize vital health information while making healthcare choices. Insufficient health literacy skills can significantly contribute to unfavorable health outcomes, including restricted adherence to medication-regimens, inadequate self-management abilities, and increased admissions and urgent care consumption.

Healthcare organizations must adopt strategies and actions to address the health literacy requirements of patients. These measures may involve instructing healthcare personnel in the use of simple and clear language, ensuring

comprehension during patient communication, and offering linguistic support for patients who speak other languages (Quigley et al., 2013).

To better the medical communication options for patients, healthcare organizations must adopt a holistic plan. This strategy should encompass more than just the implementation of communication that prioritizes patients and collaborative decisions about health. Implementing patient-centered treatment, improving focused connections, as well as facilitating decisions that are collective can enhance the wellness awareness sensitivity of an organization providing healthcare (DeWalt and McNeill, 2013).

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## 7. Conclusion

Health literacy plays a crucial role in advancing patient-doctor communication and fostering positive health outcomes. Modern patients are dependent on the scientific in nature, medical, and ethical skills of physicians. The dedication of physicians to the well-being of their patients forms the foundation for establishing trust between them. In the 21st century, physicians must prioritize the well-being of patients while navigating the economic, political, and consumer-driven environment. The rapid advancement of technology and the application of knowledge for reasons that deviate from the traditional aim of alleviating endurance and improving health, coupled with increasing disease mongering ability of various characteristics of contemporary society, highlight the need for a public discourse on the ethical foundation and evolving objectives of the field of medicine. Subsequent investigations should incorporate supplementary approaches, such as conducting joint focus groups consisting of doctors and community members. It could also address ethical dilemmas that may arise during the medical contact. These interactions could offer valuable information for doctors and the general public regarding their mutual expectations.

Finally, the use of Information Technology has remodeled the medical landscape, opening new areas to improve health literacy, educate patients on preventive care and bring patients and providers closer together. Leveraging digital tools and platforms, health care stakeholders can empower individuals to take a personal initiative to the health of their bodies and they make good decisions about this. Nevertheless, the difficulties in the area of the digital gap and the misinformation need the multistep policy of the policy-makers, healthcare providers, and technology creators, who should secure the equal access to verified health information and evoke the digital health literacy

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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