Health Literacy and Patient Satisfaction

Health Literacy

- Health literacy skills include the ability to:
  - Understand health concepts,
  - Share information with doctors
  - Make healthy choices
  - Engage in self-care and disease management

- If a person does not have adequate health literacy skills, he or she is unable to:
  - Understand health risks,
  - Evaluate different health behaviors & treatment options
  - Follow health care recommendations

Patient Satisfaction

- Patient satisfaction is used as a measure of quality health care. Areas of patient satisfaction include:
  - Access to care
  - Continuity of care
  - Courtesy
  - Emotional support
  - Overall coordination
  - Patient education
  - Patient preferences
  - Pharmacy access
  - Specialist care
  - Visit coordination

Health Literacy and Patient Satisfaction

- Areas where patients with lower health literacy were less satisfied
  - Access
  - Courtesy
  - Patient preferences
  - Emotional support
  - Patient education
• Lower literacy accounted for worse scores in seven areas of patient satisfaction:
  o Access
  o Courtesy
  o Patient preferences
  o Emotional support
  o Patient education
  o Specialist care
  o Overall coordination

• Other studies show that patients with limited health literacy:
  o Are more likely to be dissatisfied with the status of their medical condition
  o Report worse results from medical care
  o Report more difficulty in getting care
  o Report less satisfaction for:
    ▪ Clarity in communication
    ▪ Explanation of condition
    ▪ Explanation of the care process

• Other issues associated with limited literacy include:
  o Reduced trust in provider
  o Worse assessment of the quality of care received

Patient Satisfaction of Written Materials

• Patients with low literacy have greater satisfaction of materials written in an easy-to-understand manner
• Providers who have participated in programs designed to simplify educational materials, such as "Creating Reader-Friendly Print Materials" workshops have improved patient satisfaction

References