

Assessment 2: Applying Research Skills

NURS-FPX4000: Developing a Nursing Perspective

Health Literacy

Individuals' access, understanding and ability to process basic health information, also known as health literacy, plays directly into health outcomes, patient engagement, with the potential for significant impact on healthcare costs. Interventions including change-champion models, nursing-led education, and individually focused literacy programs have been shown to positively impact patient comprehension, adherence and empowerment (Ayre et al., 2023). In systematic reviews, organizational champions encourage implementation of health-literacy initiatives, with the need for more detailed reporting and evaluation. Similarly, nurses, as educators and facilitators of general health, play a crucial role, but nurse's education in the use of health literacy strategies is rarely performed. Moreover, recent evidence points to the need for the use of tailored, individual level intervention for the older adults to obtain the consistent improvement in the health literacy outcome (Marshall et al., 2025).

Health literacy is the ability of patients to obtain, process, and utilize information regarding their health for improved understanding of health conditions and the overall ability to make decisions and follow a treatment plan. Poor health literacy is associated with higher hospitalization rates, worse medication adherence, and higher healthcare costs, resulting in a systemic issue that healthcare organizations endeavour to achieve safe, equal care.

Professional Relevance and Personal Interest

I have observed clients struggle to comprehend health instructions and access services, especially those with poor reading skills and language barriers when I am working as a support worker. This experience has increased my desire to work with evidence-based strategies to improve patient comprehension and participation in care, a key competency for practice as a nurse and as manager of healthcare.

Through informal patient education sessions and interdisciplinary team meetings I have observed a marked improvement in patient understanding when we use plain language and teaching back methods. Formal training and support do not often exist for these practices, emphasizing the need for large, scalable interventions.

Research Process and Selection Criteria

Comprehensive searches were performed in PubMed, CINAHL, and Scopus using the terms “health literacy,” “patient education,” “health literacy interventions,” “health literacy champions,” and “nursing and health literacy” and targeted searches in Oxford Academic and Frontiers. Results were restricted to academic, peer reviewed articles published within the last five years that addressed intervention or implementation strategies, relevant to organizational or nursing role health literacy. In my initial broad search, I found several systematic reviews and scoping studies, and had I not narrowed the intervention type and care setting, I would have found three exemplar studies on individual- and organization-level approaches. Having selected sources that directly addressed the health literacy challenges and strategies related to this intervention, I then confirmed for each source that it was peer reviewed and up to date and evaluated its credibility.

Assessing Credibility and Relevance

All sources are published in reputable peer-reviewed journals with Health Promotion International, Frontiers in Public Health, and BMC Health Services Research guaranteeing methodological rigour and robust editorial oversight. Publication dates run from 2023 to early 2025, ensuring that the evidence is as up to date as possible. They address the key aspects of health literacy practice directly, whether it be organizational strategies (such as use of a champion model), the important roles of nursing staff, or individual level interventions, and

provide complementary and noteworthy perspectives on best practice to improve patient comprehension and engagement.

Annotated Bibliography

Ayre, J., Zhang, M., Muscat, D., et al. (2023). Systematic review of health literacy champions: Who, what and how? *Health Promotion International*, 38(4), 123–135.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daad074>.

The goal of this article is to integrate the empirical and conceptual literature on the role of ‘health literacy champions’ in healthcare organisations. A comprehensive systematic review was performed including searches across five major databases (MEDLINE, Embase, CINAHL, Scopus, and PubMed) for studies which describe the use of champions staff members explicitly tasked with promoting and embedding health-literacy practices within their organizations. While the authors found a sparse but encouraging body of work that suggests that champions may assist in the enactment of health literacy guidelines, few studies detailed the roles, selection, activities, or outcomes of champions in any appreciable way. Common barriers include insufficient funding, unclear role definitions, and lack of training, but. The conclusion is that multiple health literacy champions, spread across different organizational tiers, may bolster diffusion and sustainability of health literacy initiatives. But common barriers include inadequate funding, unclear role definitions, and inadequate training. Ayre et al. demand more stringent experiments to establish best practices in the selection, training, and performance evaluation of champions. They noted that many studies highlighted a high risk of bias and lacked detailed descriptions of roles and training. In this case, they limit the ability to have definite conclusion about their effectiveness.

Mohamed, H., Kittle, E., Nour, N., Hamed, R., Feeney, K., Salsberg, J., & Kelly, D. (2024).

An integrative systematic review on interventions to improve layperson's ability to identify trustworthy digital health information. *PLOS Digital Health*, 3(10), e0000638. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pdig.0000638>.

Mohamed et al (2024) conducted an integrative review of 18 intervention programs including web-based tutorials, mobile applications, and community workshops, designed to enhance lay persons' ability to identify and critically evaluate online health information (Mohamed et al 2024). Following a PICO approach, outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative, were systematically identified, analyzed and changes in participants' knowledge, attitudes, confidence, confidence, and self-reported health behaviors reported. They found that most interventions resulted in statistically significant improvements in e-health literacy scores and self-efficacy for information seeking, with effect sizes ranging from moderate to large. However, the review also emphasized continued barriers such as digital divide, and huge differences in baseline digital skills of participants. More importantly, the study by Mohamed et al (2024) concludes that interactive, skills-based training when delivered to learner's initial competencies and reinforced by supervised practical exercises hold the most promise for the improvement of online health information competencies and recommends additional work to perfect program design and delivery. Future research needs to include longer-term follow-up and standardized outcome measures to assess sustained training effects.

Marshall, N., Butler, M., Lambert, V., Timon, C. M., Joyce, D., & Warters, A. (2025). Health literacy interventions and health literacy-related outcomes for older adults: a systematic review. *BMC Health Services Research*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-025-12457-7>.

Marshall et al (2025) seek to synthesize evidence of interventions targeted at the older adult population and their impact on health literacy outcomes, given that low literacy in this group is associated with poor disease management and higher hospitalization rates. The authors conducted a systematic review of 34 studies and found considerable heterogeneity in assessment tools and program designs such as one-on-one coaching and group workshops, through to telehealth modules and digital tutorials. Most interventions were variable but did improve participants' comprehension of medical instructions and self-management skills; individual focused interventions (i.e., personalized coaching sessions) had the largest effect sizes. However, it was noted that the use of pre- and post-intervention measures was inconsistent, and outcomes were inconsistently reported across studies, making cross study comparisons difficult. Finally, the authors (Marshall et al, 2025) suggest shifting to standardized assessment protocols and uniform evaluation timelines for future health literacy interventions in older adults to enhance the comparability and scalability of the interventions. Future studies ought to adopt standardized assessments to make sure adequate sample size.

Summary of Learning

In developing this annotated bibliography, I gained more understanding of the organizational and individual strategies for improving health literacy. I learned how to use the library for research choosing the right databases, coming up with the appropriate keywords, and being as selective as possible. It reinforced the value of peer review, currency of publication, and relevance to practice when critically appraising each source. For instance, I now plan to utilize targeted keyword combinations and assess database filters more effectively when carrying out literature reviews. This foundation will help inform evidence-based planning of health literacy initiatives so that our work is credible and impactful going forward.

References

- Ayre, J., Zhang, M., Mouwad, D., Zachariah, D., McCaffery, K., & Muscat, D. M. (2023). Systematic review of health literacy champions: who, what and how? *Health Promotion International*, 38(4). <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daad074>
- Marshall, N., Butler, M., Lambert, V., Timon, C. M., Joyce, D., & Warters, A. (2025). Health literacy interventions and health literacy-related outcomes for older adults: a systematic review. *BMC Health Services Research*, 25(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-025-12457-7>
- Mohamed, H., Kittle, E., Nour, N., Hamed, R., Feeney, K., Salsberg, J., & Kelly, D. (2024). An integrative systematic review on interventions to improve layperson's ability to identify trustworthy digital health information. *PLOS Digital Health*, 3(10), e0000638. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pdig.0000638>

