HEALTH LITERACY:
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

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The strong, positive impact education and literacy have on health is clearly documented.

Sources:
Grosse RN, Auffrey C. Literacy and Health Status in Developing Countries. *Annu Rev Public Health* 1989. 10:281-97;

Health literacy is increasingly recognized as having a distinct influence on health and health outcomes.

Functional Health Literacy

The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.


http://www.health.gov/communication/literacy/
Health Literacy in the U.S.

9 out of 10 adults in the US has less than proficient health literacy skills

http://nces.ed.gov/naal/health_results.asp
Who is at Risk?

Adults by age in each health literacy

- Adults in the oldest age group have lower health literacy than adults in the younger age groups.

Adults by education in each health literacy level

- Nearly 50% of adults with less than a high school diploma have Below Basic health literacy.

Health Literacy Linked to Outcomes

• Under-utilization of services
• Increased medication errors
• Poor health knowledge
• Increased hospitalizations
• Poor health outcomes
• Increased healthcare costs

Interactive Framework

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK45386/
This is Bad Enough

Arts for Change

Discussion / Workshop

• How do we increase the health literacy of individuals, families and the community?

• How do we improve the health literacy of health professionals and systems?