



Title : 'Health Literacy'- An Important Tool of Assessment while Caring for the Elderly**Author(s) :** Rabia Mistry and Vinaya Vaishampayan**Institution :** Dr. B. M. N. College Of Home Science, Matunga, Mumbai-19

Introduction:

The geriatric population worldwide is increasing. Nations across the world would need to plan and allocate adequate budgets for the care of this increasing population. It would not be enough for governments and regulating bodies to plan policies but translate and transfer these pockets of information to the elderly. More importantly the growing elderly population would need to be aware of existing facilities for health care. Evaluating the knowledge of elderly to learn areas requiring additional inputs then seems to be the need of the day.

Methodology:

The present study on assessing health literacy and studying its impact on health included 200 young old geriatrics (100 male and 100 female), randomly selected from various parts of Mumbai, India for the study. The study specifically evaluated the effects of education, gender and health literacy on health status of young old geriatrics measured using different anthropometric measurements such as height, weight, BMI, WHR, MUAC and calf circumference measurements..

Results:

Study results showed that health literacy indeed is an important aspect of health care and study samples with higher literacy scores had lower body mass index. Interestingly health policies for medical care in most cases were of males as compared to females. The elderly with higher health literacy scores were significantly more likely to undergo health examinations regularly, report good self-rated health, and significantly more likely to access sufficient health information from multiple sources ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusion:

Present study stresses the need to educate and thereby improve health literacy among young old geriatrics, who are still 'not that old'. Translating knowledge into practice may mean retarding aging related disorders and disabilities and helping the aged age more gracefully.

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