Learning for Health: A Study of Health Literacy Among Patients at Community Health Center of Burlington

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Project Overview

• This study aims to provide a foundation of research leading to the development of educational resources and determination of the health education needs of the patients at the Community Health Center of Burlington
Purpose

Health literacy is a determinant of health that must be assessed and addressed by community health centers in order to improve the health of patients and families.
Our Partnership

• The partnership included 4 nursing students from the University of Vermont and Jon Bourgo, Outreach Program Manager at the CHCB

• The coalition student members were identified for inclusion in this project based on their interest in collaborating with the CHCB

• Jon Bourgo and the CHCB were identified as a public health practicum site through the public health course director, Dr. Rycki Maltby
Patient Population

- CHCB served 13,150 patients in 2010 (CHCB Data 2010)

- The social determinants of health in this population include:
  - poverty
  - malnutrition
  - food insecurity
  - poor housing
  - unhealthy environments
  - child development
  - employment status
Why Health Literacy?

- In building their new space, CHCB included a room dedicated to patient education

- The Patient Education room exists as a physical space only and has not been developed for patient use

- A significant lack of data existed concerning current access, literacy, provider and patient interest, and health knowledge deficits in this patient population
Health Literacy Research

- Current research on health literacy and community level interventions focuses on the importance of health literacy and health promotion through the training of health educators, literacy education, workshops, and referral services to education rooms
- The creation of learning environments is advised to build knowledge and skills to understand health information
- Ideal health education model includes developing partnerships
- Outreach activities include: peer led computer classes, health exhibits at union meetings, and health provider involvement in health literacy promotion (Pomerantz 2011)
MAPP Framework

• Our group used the Mobilization for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) framework to assess the need for health education in the CHCB patient population (MAPP site)

• The MAPP framework includes 6 phases:
  • Organizing phase: with Jon Bourgo
  • Vision phase
  • Assessment phase utilizing the Community Themes and Strengths Assessment
  • Strategic Issues phase
  • Goals/Strategies phase
  • Action phase
National Health Literacy

• In the United States, 88% of adults aged 16 and over did not have proficient health literacy according to the 2003 National Assessment of Health Literacy

• “Persons with limited health literacy skills are more likely to have chronic conditions and are less able to manage them effectively. Studies have found that patients with life threatening diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and HIV/AIDS, who also have limited health literacy skills, are less knowledgeable of their illness and its management.” (Kutner et. al, 2006)
Healthy People 2020

• Educational and Community-based Programs (ECBP)
  Goal: Increase the quality, availability, and effectiveness of educational and community-based programs designed to prevent disease and injury, improve health, and enhance quality of life.

• Objectives: ECBP-10
  Increase the number of community-based organizations (including local health departments, tribal health services, nongovernmental organizations, and State agencies) providing population-based primary prevention services in the following areas:
    • ECBP- 10.3 Mental Illness
    • ECBP- 10.7 Chronic Disease Programs
    • ECBP- 10.8 Nutrition
    • ECBP- 10.9 Physical Activity
Survey of CHCB patients

• Random survey, n=221 patients, collected in medical and dental waiting rooms

• 10 distributed to the Bhutanese community via a translator, the remainder (all English) were completed independently or with help from researchers

• Contained questions related to literacy (computer and health), health topics of interest, and theoretical use patterns of specific health resources (health workshops and patient education center)
Results – Current Health Literacy

• 73% reported difficulty understanding health information

• Variety of methods utilized to learn about health including; doctors (90%), internet (56%), and family (37%)

• 46% reported that they would need help using a computer
Results –
Interest in Health Literacy

• 65% of patients stated that they would use the patient education room at CHCB
• Patients reported that they would be interested in learning about various health topics including:

CHCB Health Topics of Interest

• 57% of surveyed patients stated that they are interested in attending a workshop at CHCB on a health topic.
Interventions

• The aim of this project was to provide a foundation of research leading to the development of educational resources and determination of the health education needs of the patients at CHCB

• Based on the resultant data we provided recommendations for implementations and stressed the need for further research to better illustrate institutional support and patient utilization of the educational resources implemented

• CHCB Recommendations
Prioritizing Interventions

1. Need for an individual devoted to continuing the research and spearheading the implementations

2. Further research concerning institutional and provider support for the proposed educational project

3. Based on research results, goals may include the establishment of a referral system, development of the education center space, planning and coordination of community workshops, recruitment of volunteers, and other interventions to address any unmet needs revealed by the survey
Evaluating Interventions

• Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of patient utilization and satisfaction of education room

• Data collection at workshops (number of attendees, satisfaction, future needs)

• Provider/patient feedback
Thank you to Jon Bourgo and Rycki Maltby for their enthusiasm and guidance.

We also thank the patients of CHCB for sharing their time with us.
References


Questions?