

# Tailoring health literate communication to older adults with limited health literacy.

Development and pilot-testing of a training for health care professionals.

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innovative policies for healthy ageing



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# Outline



- Introduction
  - Introduction to health literacy
  - Reducing the gap in health literacy skills
- Study aim & research questions
- Study design
- Key findings
- Conclusion

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# Introduction to health literacy



## Definition of health literacy:

- To access, understand, appraise and communicate information
- To engage with the demands of health contexts
- To promote and maintain good health\*.
- **Functional – Interactive – Critical Health literacy\*\*.**

\*Source: Kwan, B. et al. (2006). \*\*Nutbeam, D. (2006)



# Reducing the gap in health literacy skills...



**Actual health literacy skills**



**Demanded health literacy skills**



**... By tailored communication of professionals**

# Study aim & research questions



## Aim

**The development of a theory informed training on health literate communication adapted to the context of European health professionals.**

## Research questions

1. What are the core competencies of the training?
2. What are the needs and perceptions of professionals?
3. How to tailor the training to the context of professionals?

# Study design



## 1. Orientation

Identify core competencies.

**Focus group 1:**  
Explore needs and perceptions



## 2. Development

Develop draft outline of the training

**Focus group 2:**  
Opinions training outline & tailoring



## 3. Testing & evaluation

Training development and pilot-testing

**Focus group 3:**  
Evaluation & future improvements

# Key findings



1. Core competencies of the training
2. Needs and perceptions of health professionals
3. Tailoring the training to the context of professionals



## 1. Core competencies of the training

- Knowledge and awareness on health literacy and tailored communication strategies
- Ability to facilitate tailored communication to decrease HL problems and develop HL skills.
- Ability to sustain communication skills to mitigate HL problems



# Key findings



## 2. Needs & perceptions of professionals

Current experiences of professionals:

- Recognized problems related to health literacy
- Used cues indicating low health literacy

Needs and perceptions on training:

- Training in multidisciplinary teams
- Practice communication strategies
- Training on critical situations and evidence informed interventions

# Key findings



## 3. Tailoring to the health context.

- Mixed views on e-learning vs. face-to-face
- Relevant training content:  
communication skills and personal feedback
- Positive on blended learning and role play
- Sustaining of acquired skills

## 3. The training program



### 1. Increase knowledge and awareness on health literacy (2 hours):

- Definition, impact, recognition of limited health literacy

### 2: Teach tailored communication strategies (6 hours):

- Reduce health literacy problems:  
Information gathering, clear communication, teach back
- Facilitate development of health literacy skills:  
Relationship, shared decision making and self-management

### 3: Sustaining communication strategies (2 hours):

- Reflection on applying strategies in practice

# Conclusion



The literature study and the health professionals contributed to:

**The systematic development of a modular training in health literate communication tailored to the European health care context.**

# IROHLA PARTNERS



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- **National University of Ireland Galway**
  - Dr. J. Sixsmith & Mrs. P. Doyle
- **The Regional Agency for Health (ARS of the Marche region)**
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**Thank you for your attention.**

**Questions?**



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**We can tailor communication to people with low health literacy and mitigate health literacy related problems...**

