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Health literacy is the strongest determinant relevant to the successful outcome of a patient. Many Americans have low or limited health literacy skills, which prevent them from achieving optimal health. Most health literacy research has focused on patient health literacy impact on care; however, caregivers also play an integral role. This study examines the health literacy of adult caregivers.

- A convenient sample of caregivers was recruited from a 33-bed medical-surgical unit at a southwest Michigan teaching hospital.
- The researcher administered the Newest Vital Sign™ (NVS) screening tool to the caregiver.

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Demographic Data

Summary Statistics				
Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Caregiver age	41	65.9	14.0	64.0
Patient age	41	79.0	12.4	81.0
Hospitalizations	41	1.5	2.5	1.0
Literacy score	41	2.7	2.1	2.0
Duties performed	41	6.0	1.9	7.0

Annual Income	Average Literacy Score
Less than \$25,000	1.87
\$25,000 - 49,999	2.92
\$50,000 or more	4.44

Income	N	Mean	Std.	Median
Less than \$25,000	16	1.87	2.06	1.50
\$25,000-49,999	13	2.92	1.85	2.00
\$50,000 or more	9	4.44	1.88	5.00
Statistical Test	Test Statistic		P-Value	
Kruskal-Wallis	Chi-Square=17.16		0.0168	

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level.

Education	Average Literacy Score
Education	2.23
No College Degree	2.23
Some College	4.2

Education	N	Mean	Std.	Median
No college degree	31	2.23	2.00	2.00
Some college degree	10	4.20	1.93	4.50

Statistical Test	Test Statistic	P-Value
Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney	Z=6.3059	0.0126

*Significant at the 0.05 alpha level.

Socioeconomic status and formal education appear to have the most influence on caregiver health literacy levels.

- Train clinicians to assess caregiver and patient health literacy.
- Provide targeted education and use the teachback method to validate understanding with the patient and caregiver.
- Offer additional resources for patients and caregivers with low or limited literacy.

The results of this study indicate several areas for further exploration of caregiver health literacy as it relates to:

- Demographics such as age, gender and race
- Impact on hospitalizations
- Associations between caregiver duties and hospitalizations, specifically duties of personal care needs, finances and meal preparation

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