

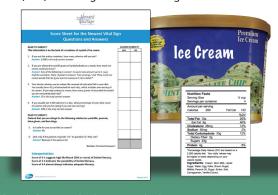
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#### **Abstract**

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.

# Methodology

- 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.



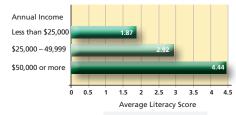
#### Results

**Demographic Data** 

\$50,000 or more.

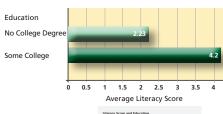
Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Median
Caregiver age	41	65.9	14.0	64.0
Patient age	41	79.0	12.4	81.0
Hospitalizations	41	1.5	2.5	1.0
Literacy score	41	2.7	2.1	2.0
Duties performed	41	6.0	1.9	7.0

Caregiver Literacy Scores by Income Literacy scores differ between income levels. Specifically, caregivers whose income is less than \$25,000 have literacy scores significantly lower than caregivers whose income is



Literacy Score by Income Level
Income N Mean 5sd Median
Less than \$15,000 16 1.87 2.66 1.50
\$25,000-85,090 13 2.30 1.85 2.00
\$50,000 mes 9 4.41 1.88 5.30
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■ Caregiver Literacy Scores by Education Literacy scores are significantly higher among caregivers with some college degree than caregivers with no college degree.



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-Valu	
Wilcoxon-Mann- Whitney	Z=6.3059		0.0126	

## **Conclusion**

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

### **Clinical Recommendations**

- 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.

## **Future Investigation**

The results of this study indicate several areas for further explor-ation 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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