"Health Literacy in Portugal"

Literature review
With the objective to evaluate Health Literacy in elderly people, some studies were developed and their results show that Health Literacy level in Portuguese elderly people, might be:

**Low Health Literacy Level**

- Difficulties to understand information received and follow medical instructions.
- Decreased autonomy to manage their own health and ineffective knowledge of their health status.
- Inadequate ability to understand health information.
- Higher hospitalization rates, increased hospital stay and health costs.

"Literacia em Saúde: Contribuição para o estudo de adaptação e validação do NVS – Newest Vital Sign."

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<th>Authors/Title</th>
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<td>Fernandes, P. - Literacia em Saúde: Contribuição para o estudo de adaptação e validação do NVS – Newest Vital Sign.</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>To contribute for the validation of the Newest Vital Sign (NVS), in a sample of people over 65 years and examined it’s psychometric properties.</td>
<td>Type of study: Exploratory study. Population: Adults over 65 years of age.</td>
<td>Mini-Mental Status Test; questionnaire (socio-demographics, healthy lifestyles measures) and Portuguese version of NVS.</td>
<td>- 79.8% of the study participants have low health literacy; - It was found that participants with inadequate health literacy tend to be less educated and have lower incomes; - It seems that inadequate health literacy is associated to poor health status, but this association was not statistically significant; - 12 participants who have adequate health literacy perform physical activities.</td>
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**“Hermenêutica da Literacia em Saúde e sua avaliação em Portugal (HLS-EU-PT)”**

Saboga-Nunes, L., Sørensen, K., & Pelikan, J. M. - *Hermenêutica da Literacia em Saúde E Sua Avaliação Em Portugal (HLS- EU-PT)*.

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<td>2014</td>
<td>• Generate a public policy agenda to promote health literacy in all settings and policies, by the means of the salutogenic model through the sense of coherence operationalization • Discuss and gather consensus over the Portuguese cultural validation of the HLS-EU instrument.</td>
<td>Type of study: Cross-sectional study. Population: People with 15 or more years. N: 750 respondents from Portugal.</td>
<td>HLS-EU-PT.</td>
<td>• 53% of participants have limited Health Literacy. From this percentage, 16% have an inadequate level and 38% have a problematic level. • The results confirm a strong association between Health Literacy and socioeconomic and demographic determinants.</td>
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"Literacia em Saúde: Resultados obtidos a partir de uma amostra de pessoas idosas portuguesas."

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| Serrão, C., Veiga, S., & Vieira, I. - Literacia em saúde: Resultados obtidos a partir de uma amostra de pessoas idosas portuguesas. | 2015 | To evaluate the degree of health literacy on a sample of elderly people, as well as knowing the association between this degree and socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. | Type of study: Cross-sectional descriptive study. | Newest Vital Sign (NVS). | • The majority of the participants (80%) showed a level of low health literacy, meaning that only 20% of respondents will be able to interpret and use effectively written information related with health.  
• Sex, educational attainment, age and marital status proved to be variables that affect significantly the level of health literacy of participants. |

Final remarks

Results from these 3 studies showed that health literacy seems to be a problem in Portugal.

In Portugal studies of health literacy are scarce. The study of this variable is a recent concern in our country. Moreover, the few studies that have been developed on this subject are focused on young people.

Knowing that Portugal is one of the European countries with a greater number of elderly and sick people, it is urgent to identify health literacy of this population so that it will be possible to define effective interventions and adjusted to the real needs of them.
Thank you for your attention!