

Symposium C5: Methodological Challenges in Intervention Research

Health Literacy: A Challenge in Nursing Intervention Research

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Purpose: The aim of this presentation is to recognize health literacy as an issue that impacts intervention research from hypothesis generation, through informed consent, protocol intervention and analysis of findings. The researcher must appreciate the health care environment, the provider/system interaction and attributes of the participant in the development of a nursing intervention protocol.

Background: Data from the most recent National Assessment of Health Literacy indicating that up to 40% of the US population had basic and below-basic health literacy skills has fueled the health care industry to consider health literacy as a significant predictor of health outcomes. Understanding the impact that health literacy has on the research process is essential for nurses preparing and conducting nursing intervention research.

Approach: Literature review

Major Points and Rationale: Health literacy is a challenging issue in the literature as it has many labels, definitions and instruments of measurement. Vulnerable populations with health, linguistic and cognitive impairments present considerable barriers to the use of the existing instruments.

Conclusions: Leveling interventions according to the health literacy of participants may expand the efficacy of existing nursing interventions and indicate further research in methods of intervention delivery including the use of the internet and simulation. Following a health literacy conceptual framework may improve the design and implementation of the intervention research, relate to vulnerable populations and build upon the existing knowledge base of health literacy in nursing science.