



# **Ageing Health Literacy**

## a new vision of the project idea

Dr. Pia Lindeskog, Swedish NCD Expert Group

Maria Lopatina, Russian NCD Expert Group

NCD EG 19th(9) Online Meeting, 23-24th of March, 2020  
Moscow, Russian Federation

# Understanding Health Literacy

**Health literacy** is the combination of personal competencies and situational resources needed for people to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about health.

IUHPE Position Statement on Health Literacy: A Practical Vision for a Health Literate World. Global Health Promotion 25, no. 4 (December 2018)

Health literacy responsiveness, also referred to as **organizational health literacy**, refers to the ways in which services, organizations and systems make health information and resources available and accessible to people, according to their health literacy strengths and limitations.

Dodson S, Good S, Osborne RH, Batterham R, Beauchamp A, Belak A, et al. Health literacy toolkit for low- and middleincome countries; 2015

# Health Literacy among older population

- Evidence shows that older people from the age of 65 and above have **significantly lower health literacy** than middle-aged adults or younger people.
- Older people aged 76 or above, have limited health literacy and are among **the most vulnerable groups in terms of health literacy**.
- European Health Literacy Survey (HLS-EU) showed that **60.8% of older respondents have limited health literacy** and perceive considerable difficulties in dealing with health information.
- Older people with low health literacy, for example, more often **assess their own health as being poor, and have worse self-management skills** (Schillinger et al, 2006; Powell et al, 2007; Wolf et al, 2007; Tang et al, 2008).
- There is a **link between low health literacy and increased mortality risk among older people** (Baker et al, 2000, 2007; Sudore et al, 2006; Cavanaugh et al, 2010; Bostock and Steptoe, 2012).
- Low health literacy is furthermore related to a **more intensive use of health services**: emergency care facilities such as hospitals and emergency medical services are used more frequently by older people with low health literacy. By contrast, they make **less frequent use of preventive measures and screening examinations** (Baker et al, 2004; Scott et al, 2002; Berkman et al, 2011).

# Features of a health literacy study in older population

- It regards not only personal competences and health literacy of older people, but also organizational health literacy, that is how different organizations communicate health related information to older people.
- It regards not only health issues but also social well-being – both are included in the concept of health literacy being one of the major social determinants of health.

# Ageing Health Literacy Project

**Aim of the Project:** to better understand HL needs (demands) of older population and supply of HL information and services (organizational health literacy), not only of the healthcare sector, but also other sectors.

**Major questions:**

- How can we assess HL in organizations?
- How can we develop criteria for non-healthcare organizations' HL?
- How can we assess HL (including digital HL) in older populations?
- How can we have practical outcomes in this?

# Health literacy is a cross-cutting topic

- The HL project could be a horizontal initiative of all NDPHS EGs.
- Once a project concept is developed, it can be sent to all EGs with the request to name a contact person if the group would like to get involved. Getting the other EGs involved will be a part of the project plan.
- Then collect information from all EGs, organize a workshop and conduct a survey.
- After that adapt the measurement tool for the healthcare sector and for other sectors, develop criteria and capacity building initiatives.

# Older population is in the focus

- The project will be linked to ageing and the idea of “ageing health literacy”.
- HLS-EU questionnaires will be adapted to older population and organizations and validated in Baltic Sea Region countries that are interested in the project.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of several overlapping, curved green shapes in various shades of green, creating a layered, organic effect.

We invite all interested countries to participate  
in the project idea development and find  
solutions for funding the project



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION**