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公立大学法人福島県立医科大学放射線医学県民健康管理センター  
国際シンポジウム事務局(広報・国際連携室)

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2023 Fukushima Medical University International Symposium on the Fukushima Health Management Survey

Secretariat of International Symposium

Office of Public Communications and International Cooperation, Radiation Medical Science Center for the Fukushima Health Management Survey, Fukushima Medical University

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**2023**  
**Fukushima Medical University**  
**5<sup>th</sup> International Symposium**

March 2023

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Emerita

Department of Social & Behavioral Sciences  
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In these fraught times, health messages have been challenged, trust has diminished, and the health and well-being of communities have been profoundly affected.

## **Health Literacy: Increasing Access to Information, Care and Services**

2

Attention to health literacy can contribute to ongoing efforts to increase access to information, services, and care and thereby reduce disparities.

Health literacy action contributes to social justice.

Please note that I will move very quickly over the literacy and numeracy background [slides 6 to 13] to focus on an action plan for health literacy.

- You will have access to all of my slides.
- I encourage you to examine the PIAAC survey results for all countries and those related only to Japan

## Presentation Plan

3

- Look up PIAAC then insert results for JAPAN

<https://gpseducation.oecd.org/CountryProfile?primaryCountry=JPN&treshold=10&topic=AS>

# Literacy

4

## Literacy is a Right

The word is not the privilege of some few men but the right of every man [sic]

Paulo Freire

Literacy is a fundamental human right and the foundation for lifelong learning.

It is fully essential to social and human development in its ability to transform lives.

UNESCO

## Literacy is a Social Good

- Social mobility
- Contribution to society
- Civic engagement
- Foundation of a free and democratic society

# Adult Literacy Surveys

5

## Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD]

### Waves of assessments

- IALS 1990s,
- ALLS 2003,
- PIAAC 2011-2017, 2018-2024

- **Focus:** Literacy, numeracy, problem solving skills of adults in industrialized nations
- **Measures:** Adults ability to use everyday materials to accomplish everyday tasks with accuracy and consistency

## **Words & Numbers Get in the Way**

Significant numbers of adults in most industrialized nations have difficulty using materials found in everyday life in order to accomplish everyday tasks.

These adults are limited in their ability to participate in economic & civic life

# OECD 2012 PIAAC Average Literacy Proficiency

7

Country	Score
Australia	280.4
Austria	269.5
Canada	273.5
Czech Republic	274.0
Denmark	270.8
England (UK)	272.6
Estonia	275.9
Finland	287.5
France	262.1
Germany	269.8
Ireland	266.5

Country	Score
Italy	250.5
Japan	296.2
Korea	272.6
Netherlands	284.0
Norway	278.4
Poland	266.9
Slovak Republic	273.8
Spain	251.8
Sweden	279.2
United States	269.8
Average	272.8

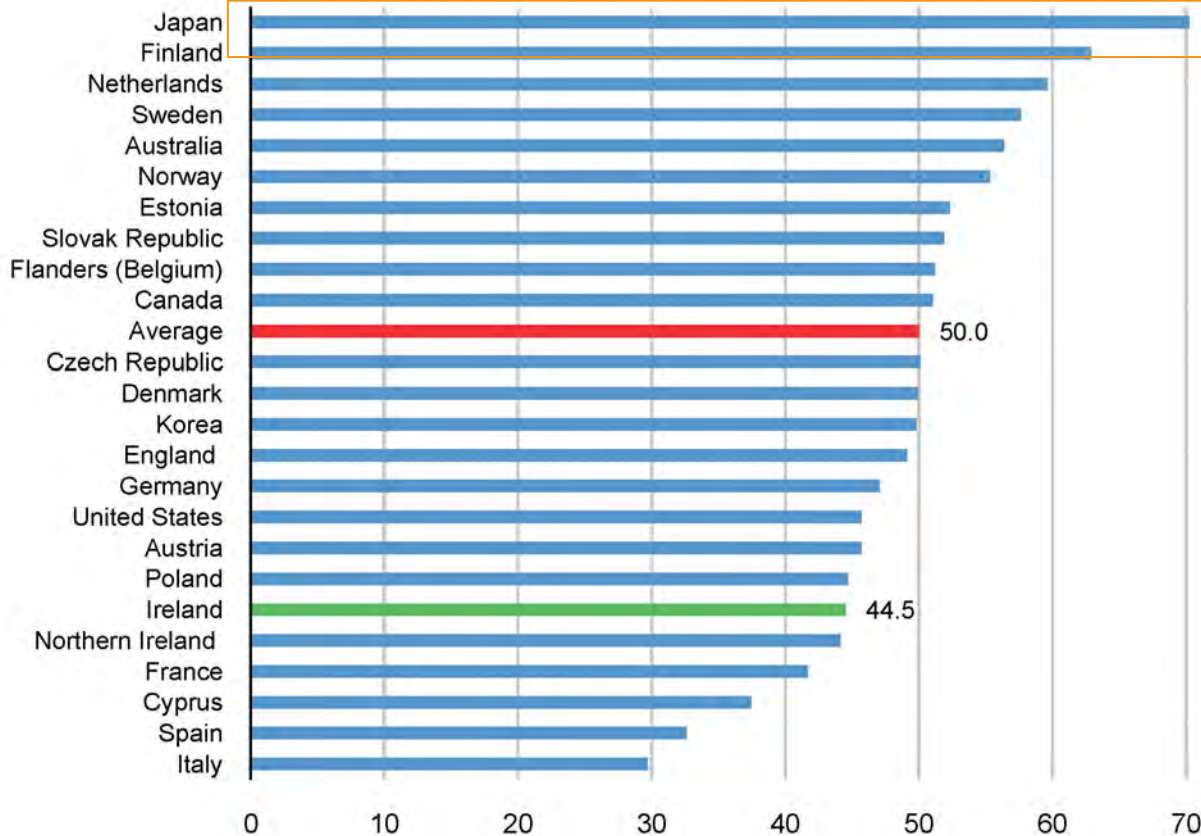




# 2012 PIAAC: % of Adults with Literacy Proficiency

8

Figure 2.2  
Percentage of adults (16-65) at Levels 3-4-5  
of literacy proficiency



# Japan's Scoring is Above OECD Average

9

## Proficiency

- The proficiency in literacy and numeracy is above OECD average for all age groups. Proficiency in numeracy is maintained over the long term.
- The proficiency in problem-solving in technology-rich environments is above OECD average for most of the age groups.
- While average proficiency levels are quite high, segments of the population have problematic skills.

# Across all Countries Who Has Limited Literacy Skills?

10

- Members of marginalized population groups
  - Members of minority population groups
  - Immigrants
- People with limited resources and/or living in poverty
- People living in under resourced areas
- People with less education
- Elders [with limited resources]

# Literacy & Social Determinants

11

## A Complex Consideration

### **Literacy is Socially Determined**

- Social Status & Geography
- Parental Skills & Resources
- Community Resources
- Quality of Schooling

### **Literacy is a Social Determinant**

- Progress in school
- School achievement
- Work options
- Income
- Civic Participation

# PIAAC Finding for Japan

12

## Links to Social Factors

- Literacy proficiency has statistically positive relationship to participation in volunteer activities and political efficacy or the sense of influence on the political process.
- Lower levels of literacy and educational attainment are associated with negative social outcomes.

# What are the Links to Health?

13

- Literacy assessments focus on everyday tools and skills: the skills to make use of information in various situations in everyday life.
- Skills applied to health and science information in health-related settings may differ due to unrealistic assumptions, specialized language, unfamiliar tools, social norms related to status and education . . .
- We are now exploring links and issues related to environmental health and to science in general.

# Health Research Question

14

1993 publication of the first adult literacy survey →  
the start of health literacy studies

## **Research Question:**

What are the implications for health?

# Findings: Literacy is Linked to Health Outcomes

15

AHRQ  
Reviews 2004  
2011

National  
Academies of  
Science  
IOM Report 2004

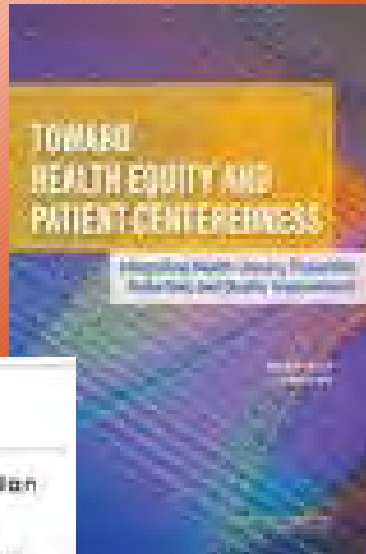
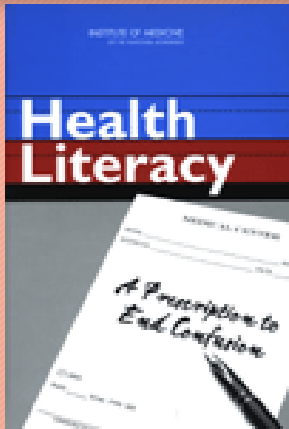


- Health Promotion
- Disease Prevention
- Screening & Early Detection
- Chronic Disease Management
- Morbidity
- Mortality



# Reports, White Papers, Calls to Action, Guidelines...

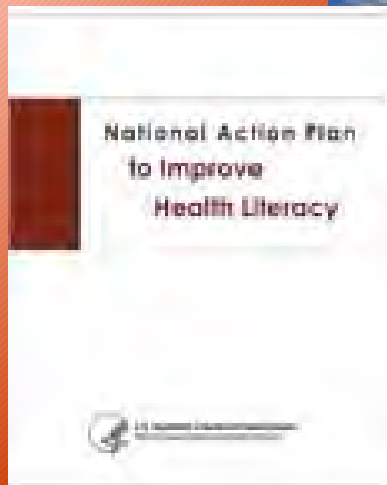
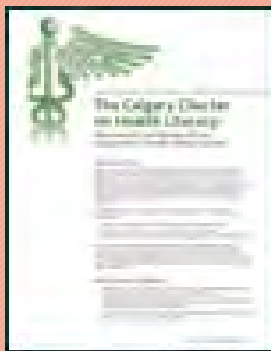
16



### The Physician Charter:

Medical Professionalism In The New Millennium

The Physician Charter identifies three fundamental principles that underlie professionalism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the primacy of patient welfare, patient autonomy and social justice. [See more...](#)



National Call to Action To Promote Oral Health  
Office of the Surgeon General



# What Happens When Words Get in the Way?

17

## For Individuals

- Get lost
- Make errors
- Run out of words
- Retreat into silence
- Cover up
- Take/be assigned a passive role
- Limited participation
- Limited advocacy
- Diminished options
- Lost entitlements
- Lost rights
- Endangered health

# What Happens When Words Get in the Way?

18

## For Society

- Increased Costs
- Fewer Contributions
- Limited Resources
- Erosion of Trust
- Inequities
- Injustice

# Dilemma

19

We are aware of the public's limited skills and of the health consequence ...

How do we increase literacy skills?

We, in the health and social service sectors, are not the needed literacy experts!

We cannot wait for the education sector to improve population skills

# What Can WE Do?

20

Analyze characteristics of our practices, our institutions, our social services and health systems

Identify barriers

Remove barriers to information, care, services

# Consider Our Public Health, Health Care, and Social Service

21

Focus on our skills, our work,  
our communication, our practices:

Examine the capacity of professionals and institutions to provide accessible information and to support the active engagement of people seeking information, care, and services

# Health Literacy Practice

22

## Health Literacy Informed Action in support of:

Democratization of Knowledge

Health Equity

Social Justice

## Health Literacy Practice Intent:

- Improve Communication
- Build Trust
- Remove Barriers
- Leave no one behind

# Errors & Corrections

23

## Error:

We had been too limited in our understanding of literacy

## Correction:

Literacy skills Include

- Reading & Writing
- Speaking & Listening
- Math & Numeracy

Literacy is an Interaction

- e.g. Between a reader & writer
- e.g. Between a speaker & listener



# Errors & Corrections

24

## Error:

We narrowly focused on the the skills of the public/patients to the exclusion of other key factors

## Correction:

Examine key variables such as talk and texts, tasks and contexts

## Apply literacy findings:

Literacy is influenced by the environment and is often context specific

We can ease the burden on our patients and clients by changing practice and making systemic changes

# An Evolving Concept

25

## HL as an **individual characteristic**

- Measures of individual skills
- Change: Skill improvement

## HL as an **interaction**

- Measures of match between skills and texts
- Change: text improvement

## HL as an **outcome** of social factors

- Measures of accessibility
- Change: System improvement

We must pay attention to the literacy skills of the reader or listener as well as to the communication skills of the writer or speaker.

Environmental factors influence  
access, concentration,  
comprehension  
Inclusion, and action

# Game: Connect All the Dots

26



Use 4 straight connected lines  
Once you begin: Do not lift pen from  
paper

# Boxed In: Focus on the Individual



# Think outside the Box

28



Professionals'  
Rigor and Skills

Accessible  
Information  
Texts and Tasks



Professionals'  
Rigor and Skills

Institutional  
Norms, Policies & Practice

30

Accessible  
Information  
Texts and Tasks

Professionals'  
Rigor & Skills



Institutional  
Norms, Policies & Practice



Accessible  
Information  
Texts and Tasks

Health  
Literacy

Professionals'  
Rigor and Skills





# Action Model for Health Literacy

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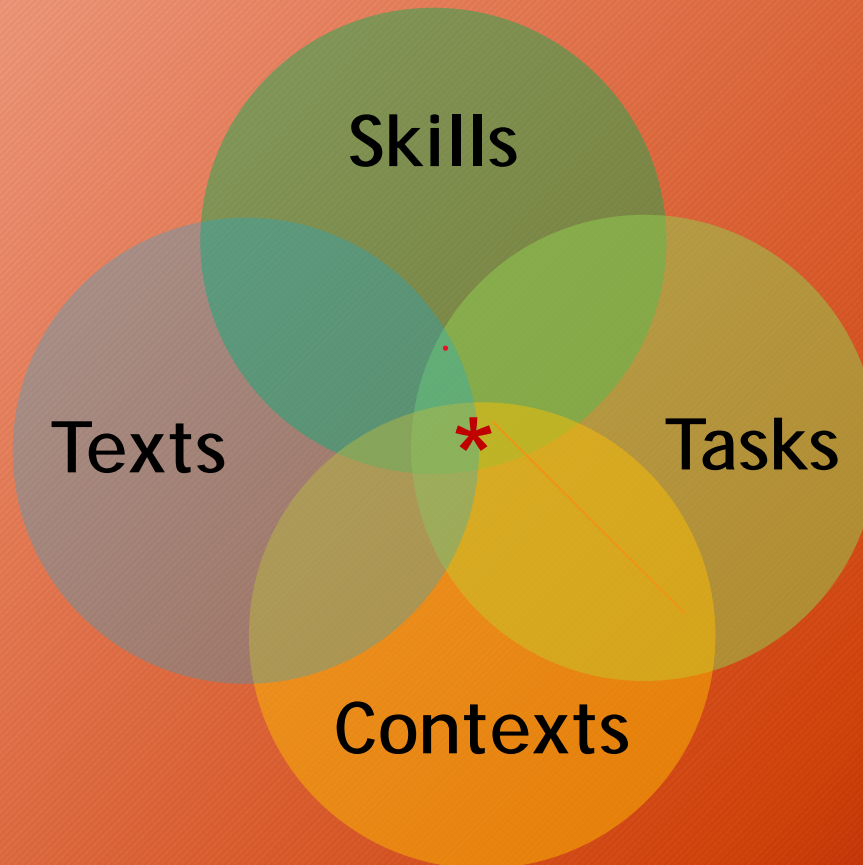
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RERudd



# Action Model for Health Literacy

©  
RERudd

33



Action must  
Involve at least  
2 of the factors

Research must  
Involve at least  
2 of the variables

# Health Literacy Key Components

34

- 1. Skills:** of the lay public & of health professionals
- 2. Texts:** Health information: written, spoken, posted, displayed
- 3. Tasks:** Actions people need to take for healthful outcomes
- 4. Contexts:** Environments where health related activities take place

# Identified Problems

35

- **Individuals:** Limited literacy skills among member of the public
- **Professionals:** Limited communication skills outside of peer group
- **Texts and Tools:** Poorly designed and carelessly developed
- **Tasks:** complex actions to be undertaken without assistance
- **Institutions:** Physical as well as social barriers impede access to information, entry, care ...
- **Systems:** barriers include bureaucratic, policy, practice, as well as normative behaviors

# Available Evidence

36

**Documented**: Significant proportions of adults in most industrialized nations have limited literacy and numeracy skills

**Documented**: Literacy skills are linked to social factors as well as to health outcomes

**Documented**: Health systems and health care processes have become increasingly complex

**Documented**: There is a profound mismatch between current literacy demands/expectations and average skills of adults

**It is Time for Action**

# 1a. Skills of the Public

## Action: Understand Needs

37

Become familiar with the public's strengths and deficits

Raise awareness

Use literacy findings to help shape action

Advocate for educational opportunities for all

### Assessed Population Skills

Surveys: NALS, IALS, ALLS, PIAAC

- Reading
- Writing
- Numeracy
- Oral exchange
- Use of Technology
- Problem Solving
- Navigation

# 1b. Skills of Professionals

## Action: Improve Communication

38

### Professional Education

- Share Information about literacy and numeracy issues
- Include communication training at all levels of professional education
- Provide training in the use of available resources & tools
- Require scientific rigor for the information exchange

### Practice

- Engage in Respectful Dialogue
- Take Responsibility for Clarity
- Attend to Numeracy & Data reports and displays
- Apply scientific rigor for written, spoken, and posted information
- Use Assessment tools

## 2. Texts

# Action: Assess & Improve Texts

39

- Insist on a scientific approach to the development of written, posted, spoken, and displayed information
- Do the math for the recipient
- Develop materials with rigor
  - Follow guidelines
  - Pilot test with intended audience
  - Modify as needed, repeat process
  - Disseminate & test

Focus Attention on  
Vocabulary  
Jargon  
Organization  
Concepts  
Math  
Displays  
Use of technology  
Develop/Test/Revise



# 3. Tasks

## Action: Analyze & Ease Tasks

40

- Examine expectations: assigned tasks and needed activities
- Analyze demands [deconstruct tasks]
  - Consider the needed actions / activities
  - Understand the literacy skills involved
  - Understand the user perspective
  - Correct any mismatch between skills and expectations
- Ease the burden for the lay public
  - Improve tools
  - Improve directions
  - Simplify tasks

# 4. Contexts

## Action: Assess the Environment

41

- Observe people, movement, settings
- Check navigation ease
- Examine policies & regulations
- Assess resources
- Analyze the normative behaviors, practices, & procedures
- Analyze the social and physical environment

### Plan for Needed Change

- Identify barriers related to access to information, care, and services
- Remove barriers
- Identify and strengthen facilitating factors

# Bring About Change

42

**We have the evidence and the tools**

## **Implications of continued inaction:**

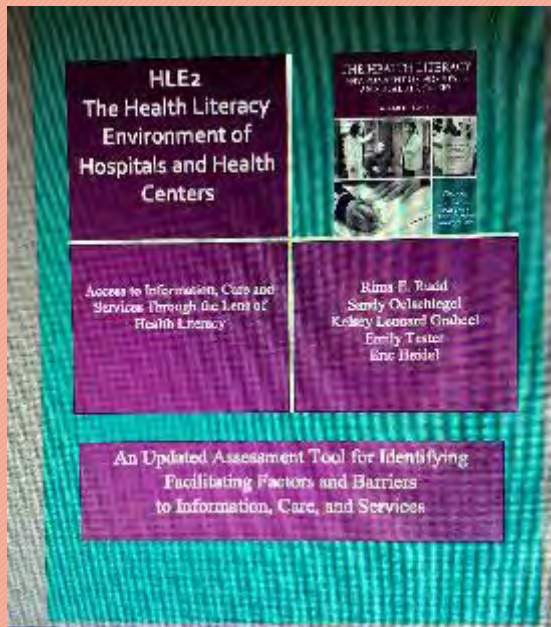
- Health Disparities
- Inequities in access to information, care and services

## **Needed Action:**

- Accessible information [democratization of knowledge]
- Dignified exchanges and participatory engagement
- Identification and removal of barriers

# Resource: HLE<sup>2</sup> Assessment Tool

43



## Assessment for Strategic Planning

- Organizational Policies and Practices
- Navigation
- Culture & Language
- Communication
- Resource Analyses

<https://hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy>

# The Appeal & Excitement of Health Literacy Work

44

## From the Policy Perspective:

- Links to social justice
- Links to health disparities
- Links to international consensus: Literacy as a Right

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948

## From the Practical Perspective:

- Literacy can be improved
- Communication skills can be improved
- Texts are malleable and can be made easier to access
- Processes can be examined and modified
- Environments can be examined and changed
- Action is plausible and possible

# Added Resources & References

45

- [www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy](http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy)
- <https://health.gov/our-work/national-health-initiatives/health-literacy>
- [www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/healthliteracy)
- [sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy](http://sph.umd.edu/research-impact/research-centers/horowitz-center-health-literacy)

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