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国際シンポジウム事務局（広報・国際連携室）
 kenkani@fmu.ac.jp  Tel: 024-581-5454(平日9～17時)
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
 kenkani@fmu.ac.jp, TEL: +81-24-581-5454 (Weekday, 9a.m. - 5 p.m. JST)
Health literacy as a driving force of community resilience in crisis

GOTO Aya
Center for Integrated Science and Humanities & Office of Pregnancy and Birth Survey, Radiation Medical Science Center for the Fukushima Health Management Survey, Fukushima Medical University

Based on presentations at IAEA meetings in 2022, ICRP 2021+1, and Science Council of Japan’s International Conference
Health literacy initiative from Fukushima

Health literacy
Individual and organizational capacity

Professional capacity building
Health literacy workshop for health professionals

Community capacity building
“Creative Health” project for school children

New crisis
Developing health information with school teachers
Public health doctors and nurses in Japan

Community

Evidence

Public health nurses and doctors

Health information

Health policies

Health promotion activities
### Mothers’ concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012</th>
<th>% of mothers with depressive symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fukushima City</strong></td>
<td>At 18 months (n=274)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child health check data</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about <strong>differences in risk perception</strong> about radiation among family members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p=0.02 (Chi-square test)
Two-item depression screen was used.

Public health nurses attending workshops to learn about health effects of radiation

They recognized their...

- Role as a community information channel
- Need for communication skills development

“We must say what we think about what we have learned; not just what the government says.”

BMC Health Services Research. 2014; 14: 129.
Health literacy

“The cognitive and social skills which determine the motivation and ability of individuals to gain access to understand and use information in ways which promote and maintain good health”

WHO, 1998

Health professionals’ skills

Community residents’ skills

Rudd RE.
Organizational Health Literacy

“Organizational health literacy is the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others.” (Healthy People 2030)
Health professionals’ skills  

Community residents’ skills

Rudd RE.
Health literacy training

Assessment skills  Revision skills  Field practice

- **Sentences**
  Avoid jargon, grade 5-8 level, etc.

- **Graphs**
  Pictograms, infographics

- **Communication**
  Marker method
  = Ask readers to mark difficult words and phrases.

Training evaluation: Attendance and application

- From 2011 to 2019, about 25% of public health nurses in Fukushima had been trained.
- Nearly half of the participants had reported using their new skills in practice at the one-year follow-up.

“When I gave a talk about exercise and practiced at an elderly club, I used topic sentences and SAM (assessment tool) to make a leaflet. I was able to clearly communicate my points and facilitate [the session] smoothly.”

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Training evaluation: Skills improvement

- Nurses showed more positive attitudes toward feedback from the community residents.
- Their self-evaluation of risk communication competencies improved.

Trained nurses were 2 times more satisfied with the feedback from the community.

Training evaluation: Audience’s evaluation

- Older residents and those not seeing doctors regularly were more likely to notice improvements in health information from the trained nurses.

Health literacy capacity building contributes to...
1. Promoting communication between professionals and the public
2. Preventing inequity in access to health information

New target groups

- **Professionals**: Nutritionists, school administrators, disaster prevention officers, radiation consultants, court investigators, etc.
- **Students**: Medical and nursing schools

### Science Laboratory for medical students at FMU

- Read assigned articles about health literacy
- Conduct a survey among their peers about the graphic presentation of data and risk perception
- Analyze data and interpret results
- Present to other students, and write a report

Students compared a graph and a pictogram presenting the lifetime probability of breast cancer incidence for a 50-year-old woman.

- Preferred by both women and men.
- Trusted among men and those with a lower literacy level.
- More accurate comparative risk perception (risk of getting breast cancer perceived as higher than that of dying in a car accident) among women.
• Professionals from overseas: International students, JICA trainees, etc.
Online health literacy training for public health nurses outside Fukushima

- Organized by the prefectural health & welfare office
- December 2021
- 42 participants (public health nurses, administrators, etc.)
- > 80% answered (in a post-participation questionnaire) that learned skills could be applied immediately.
- Participants also wrote that:
  - They could apply their learned skills to support COVID-19 patients.
  - They want to share their learned skills with colleagues.
  - They renewed their commitment to taking account of residents’ perspectives.
**eHealth Literacy**

“The ability to seek, find, understand, and appraise health information from *electronic sources* and apply the knowledge gained to addressing or solving a health problem.”


Health professionals’ skills

Community residents’ skills

Health Literacy

Rudd RE.
To promote health literacy

**Point 1:** Use plain language to explain complex concepts

**Point 2:** Be attentive to numeracy complexity

**Point 3:** Collaborate with the intended audience

Children at elementary schools
The project team is eager to learn about your experience and ideas about health. During the project you will take part in up to three workshops:

- **Body**: where you will learn about how blood works in the body.
- **Food**: where you will think about the food you cook and eat.
- **ACT**: where you will show and tell us about where you live.

"Creative Health"
Activity aims
Facilitate students’ scientific and creative thinking, working in teams, expressing their opinions, and presenting.

Project evaluation
At two model schools in Fukushima...
• Children appreciated presenting, measuring, learning connections between nutrition and health, and working collaboratively with peers.
• They perceived their health and the foods in their community more positively after participating.

Creative health online training for facilitators
Will be expanded to Indonesia, Cambodia, and Rwanda.

Igaku no Ayumi. 2022; 282: 1159-1162.
Activities in Indonesia

Students
“The activities were fun. We learned about drama and how to make food.”

Parents
“My kid was very happy when telling me about this activity in school.”

Teachers
“Learn to accept various opinions that students will convey.”
“Children can know their ability.”

Developing information with school teachers

Homework examples
Thinking ways to measure respiratory volume

Thinking people involved in preparing foods

Comparing a similar case in a different country

1. Focus on culturally-adapted and visually-appealing materials
2. Deliver communication products quickly
3. Use existing relationships of collaboration and trust

Our health literacy initiatives span two arcs of health literacy, crossing borders, and prepare us to face a new crisis using existing trust relationships and digital tools.
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