

Oral Health Literacy and Related Factors of Mid-Aged and Older Adults in the Community

Mu-Hsing Ho, MSN¹

Chia-Chi Chang, PhD, RN²

Megan Fang Liu, PhD, RN²

(1)Department of Nursing, Taipei Medical University Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan

(2)School of Gerontology Health Management, College of Nursing, Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan

Purpose: To understand the oral health literacy of mid-aged and older adults in the community and to identify related factors affecting their oral health literacy.

Methods: This was a cross-sectional study conducted with a total of 263 mid-aged and older adults living in the community with the convenience sampling method. Data collection occurred between November, 2015 and December, 2015 in Taiwan. We invited and recruited eligible participants for the study and inclusion criteria are middle-aged and seniors aged over 45, can communicate using Mandarin with clear consciousness, and no serious visual impairment. This study excluded participants who were illiterate. A face-to-face interview by the researcher was conducted which included a measure of oral health literacy-adult questionnaire(OHL-AQ), demographic data, and collecting information from participants about their oral hygiene behavior. The survey data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test, and Pearson's correlation.

Results: We carried out an analysis based on the different dimensions of original OHL-AQ questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into four domains and the listening domain had highest average scores ($M=0.80$, $SD=0.31$), followed by the decision-making domain ($M=0.70$, $SD=0.24$), the numeracy domain ($M=0.67$, $SD=0.31$), and the reading comprehension domain ($M=0.58$, $SD=0.23$) in this study. The oral health literacy scores of mid-aged was higher than older adults ($t=5.981$, $p<.001$). Participants with higher educational level ($F=27.395$, $p<.001$) and better financial situation ($F=10.208$, $p<.001$) scored higher in oral health literacy. The oral health literacy of those with no dentures or fixed dentures was significantly higher than those with removable dentures. Those presently in work had significantly higher oral health literacy than those currently out of work ($t=-5.502$, $p<.001$). The study also indicated that the oral health literacy of those with no dentures or fixed dentures was significantly higher than those with removable dentures ($F=5.648$, $p<.001$). In terms of choice of oral hygiene tools, those with a fixed brand that they considered suitable for them had significantly higher oral health literacy scores than those who did not choose specific brands ($t=-3.339$, $p=.001$).

Conclusion: Further research project conduct intervention of improving oral health literacy is needed. This study suggested the interventional strategies that aim at promoting oral health literacy among community mid-aged and older adults should strengthen their reading comprehension ability and should target those who with older age, lower educational level and financial situation, those who with removable dentures and did not choose specific brands of their oral hygiene tools.

Title:

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References:

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Abstract Summary:

Health literacy is defined the abilities with which an individual acquires, processes, and understands basic health-related messages and chooses services, it's highly related to health promotion and patient education.

Content Outline:

Nowadays, many studies discuss the correlation between oral health condition and quality of life. However, few studies explore the oral health literacy and to understand whether people's oral health knowledge and skill level were adequate.

This research found that people scored least in reading comprehension ability domain, showing that the public needs to improve their reading comprehension further enhanced their oral health literacy. However, reduction in reading comprehension could be due to deteriorating cognitive functions, information processing speed, and visual acuity in the elderly community.

We found that higher education level and better financial situation scored higher in oral health literacy. The oral health literacy of those with no dentures or fixed dentures was significantly higher than those with removable dentures. The study also indicated that people who select a fixed brand and suitable oral cleaning tools have higher oral health literacy than those who don't, which demonstrates those who pay attention to the suitability of the oral cleaning tools have improved oral knowledge and skills.

In the future, nursing education courses should add oral health education and training to provide professional expertise to the nursing personnel and collaborate with oral health professionals and dentists, thus further strengthening oral self-care behaviors in the community.

First Primary Presenting Author

Primary Presenting Author

Mu-Hsing Ho, MSN
Taipei Medical University Hospital
Department of Nursing
Registered Nurse
Taipei
Taiwan

Professional Experience: My professional experience focus on gerontological nursing and community health nursing, I have participated several research regarding elderly population. In my master program, I studied about health literacy among older adults. Elderly population's health promotion issues become more and more important due to the aging population increasing in all over the world. More attention and efforts should be provided in the future.

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Second Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Chia-Chi Chang, PhD, RN
Taipei Medical University
School of Gerontology Health Management, College of Nursing
Professor
Taipei
Taiwan

Professional Experience: My professional experience focus on geriatric nursing, I have participated several research regarding elderly population. In my PhD program, I studied about feeding and nutritional issues among people with dementia. Dementia care have become a major problem all over world due to the aging population increasing. More attention and efforts should be provided in the future.

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Third Secondary Presenting Author

Corresponding Secondary Presenting Author

Megan Fang Liu, PhD, RN
Taipei Medical University
School of Gerontology Health Management, College of Nursing
Assistant Professor
Taipei
Taiwan

Professional Experience: 2012-present -- Assistant Professor, School Gerontology Health Management, College of Nursing, Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan 2011 -- Adjunct Faculty, Department of Nursing, Mount Mercy University, Cedar Rapids, IA 2010-2012 -- Registered Nurse, Oaknoll, an Adult Retirement Community, Iowa City, IA Author or coauthor in the field of gerontological nursing with an emphasis of mental health issues in older adults.

Author Summary: 2012-present -- Assistant Professor, School Gerontology Health Management, College of Nursing, Taipei Medical University, Taipei, Taiwan 2011 -- Adjunct Faculty, Department of Nursing, Mount Mercy University, Cedar Rapids, IA 2010-2012 -- Registered Nurse, Oaknoll, an Adult Retirement Community, Iowa City, IA Author or coauthor in the field of gerontological nursing with an emphasis of mental health issues in older adults.