

The Relationship Between Health Literacy and Quality of Life in Nurses Working in Kashmar Hospitals in 2018

ABSTRACT

Background and Objective: It is important to identify people with inadequate health literacy, especially among health care providers. Also, their quality of work life is one of the important factors for ensuring the stability of the health system. It seems that the relationship between quality of life and nursing health literacy is an important factor in achieving a high level of care quality. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between health literacy and quality of life in nurses working in Kashmar hospitals in 2018.

Materials and Methods: This descriptive cross-sectional study of correlation type was carried out on 230 nurses working in Shahid Modarres and Hazrat Abolfazl (AS) hospitals in 2018 who were selected through the census. The data were collected using the demographic questionnaire, HELIA questionnaire, and Quality of Life questionnaire by qualified nurses. Data were analyzed using the SPSS v.16 software.

Results: The mean age of nurses was 31.3 ± 6.82 years which included 37.4% male and 62.6% female. According to the results, 8.3% had inadequate health literacy, 52.6% had adequate health literacy and 39.1% had high health literacy. The mean score of health literacy was 80.98 ± 10.65 (adequate). The mean score of quality of life was 65.39 ± 11.55 (Moderate). The highest quality of life score was related to physical, social, psychological and environmental dimensions, respectively. The correlation coefficient (Spearman) showed that there was a significant relationship between the level of health literacy and quadruple dimensions of quality of life ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: According to the findings, there is a direct relationship between health literacy and different dimensions of nurses' quality of life. Therefore, more emphasis on the importance of health literacy and the quality of life in health system policy-making and improving the quality of services is necessary. By planning and designing useful programs in the health literacy area appropriate to nurses, effective steps can be taken to develop health literacy skills in the community and improve Nurses' quality of life.

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Introduction

The term health literacy has been used in health literature since the 1970s (1). According to the WHO, health literacy has been introduced as a cognitive skill that determines the motivation and ability of individuals in accessing, understanding and using the information to maintain and improve the people health (2). Based on this definition, adequate and applicable health literacy means being able to apply literacy skills in health-related issues, such as drug copies, visit cards, drug labels, and home care instructions (3). Today, health literacy is being addressed as a global issue and has been considered by policy makers as one of the essential tools for improving the community health and improving the quality of health care delivery due to its important role in decision-making in health-related issues (4).

In the last decade, attention to health literacy is one of the most important health issues for patients in clinical settings in the United States, Canada, Britain, France, the Netherlands, Japan, Brazil, and Italy. In Canada, only 45% of people had sufficient health literacy skills (5). Health literacy plays a vital role in making people's informed health decisions and as a means to improve the health outcomes of the community. Therefore, health literacy is a social component of health and several reasons indicate that many adverse health-related outcomes occur due to inadequate health literacy (6).

There are some evidence that low health is associated with adverse health outcomes, harmful health behaviors, less patient satisfaction and in some cases, mortality. In fact, many believe that low health literacy causes health inequalities (7). In a study conducted in Baluchistan, 68 percent of

people aged 65-18 years had inadequate and borderline health literacy (8). In a study conducted in Bushehr, Mazandaran, Kermanshah, Qazvin, and Tehran in 2007 in the age range of 18-65 years old, 6.56% of individuals in the age range of 18-65 years had inadequate health literacy and only 28.1% of people had high levels of health literacy (9). Also, another study conducted on the elderly in Isfahan in 2013, showed that 79.7% of the participants had inadequate health literacy, 11.6% had borderline health literacy and only 8.8% of them had adequate health literacy. According to the results, nearly 80% of the individuals had low health literacy which, increase the hospitalization rate and the rate of doctor referral (10).

Also, in a study conducted in Khaf, the level of health literacy was measured in four communicative areas of spoken, written, empowerment and support. Results indicated low mean scores in all four areas (11). Identifying people with inadequate health literacy is important, especially among health care providers who are unlikely to be aware of the needed skills (12). Among health care providers, nurses have direct responsibility for protecting the health of people in the community. They have a close relationship with patients and have many important roles such as clinical care, counseling, follow-up proper treatment and training the prevention ways. They are also responsible for their health and patients' health in a direct and indirect manner (13, 14). Regarding the effect of nurse's health literacy on improving health literacy and promoting community health, addressing nurses' health literacy and effective factors is necessary (15). According to the results of various studies, health literacy affects the general health

status of individuals (16) and the quality of life associated with health (17). Applied quality of life in medical sciences is recognized as the quality of life associated with health. It defined as an individual's mental assessment of his current health status, health cares, and health promotion activities and allows the individual to pursue valuable goals (18, 19).

Considering the personal quality of work life in hospitals is the major concentrations in many organizations and is one of the important factors for ensuring the stability of the health system. The quality of life of these people is importance because of the occupation type and its sensitivity. It seems that the relationship between the quality of work life performance and the degree of nurses' participation is an important factor in achieving a high level of care quality (20). One study showed that the quality of work life has an important role in the behavioral and skillful reactions of employees such as right effort and job participation, type of performance, service delivery, desertion and changing job place (21). Nurses who based their skills on the basis of scientific evidence have been able to make better decisions, make better quality cares, reduce the hospitalization time and cost of patients (22).

In Iran, very few studies have been conducted on the health literacy of individuals, especially health care providers in the health system, which is considered as an important factor in decision making and improving job skills. Therefore, addressing this subject and the affecting factors can be helpful as an effective tool for health decision-makers (11). Since nurses must have the necessary skills to increase their productivity in order to reduce the patient's injuries and other health measures, it is necessary to investigate the

nurse's health literacy level. Improving the nurses' quality of life is one of the important factors in the stability and effectiveness of the health system. The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between health literacy and quality of life in nurses working in Kashmar hospitals in 2018.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive cross-sectional study of correlation type was carried out on 230 nurses working in Kashmar hospitals in 2018 who were selected through the census. Kashmar Hospitals (Shahid Modarres Hospital and Hazrat Abolfazl Hospital) include the following departments: emergency, intensive care units, internal, neurological, infection, cardiac care units, CCU, ICU, NICU, dialysis, obstetrics and gynecology, children, men's and women surgery, headquarters and administrative department. First, a list of all nurses in different departments was prepared. Inclusion criteria included having at least a bachelor's degree in nursing, willingness and informed consent to participate in the research, having at least one year of work experience and having three working shifts. All the nurses with the mentioned criteria were included in the study. Exclusion criteria included a failure to complete more than 10% of the questionnaire.

Questionnaires were completed by nurses in hospitals through the self-reported method. All nurses were asked to answer the questionnaire with complete honesty and they were assured that all information requested in the questionnaire would be used confidentially. It is worth noting that the present study was approved by the Research Committee (code number: 970334) and the Ethics Committee at Mashhad University of Medical Sciences. The data collection tools

consisted of 3 parts:

A) Demographic questionnaire: including age, sex (gender), marital status and education degree, interest in the nursing profession, type of employment, average daily working hours, scientific study hours and most types of shift work.

B) Health literacy for Iranian adults (HELIA) questionnaire: the questionnaire has 33 items and measures Iran's urban health literacy (18 to 65 years) in five dimensions of reading (4 items), analyzing (4 items), access (6 items), understanding (7 items), and decision-making skills (12 items). A likert five-point scale was used for scoring in this questionnaire. In reading skills, 5 was given to totally easy, 4 was given to Easy, 3 was given to Not Easy Not Hard, 2 was given to hard and 1 was given to totally hard. In the other 4 dimensions of health literacy, 5 was given to always, 4 was given to most of the time, 3 was given to sometimes, 2 was given to rarely and 1 was given to never. The raw score of each person in each of the fields is obtained from the sum of scores. This tool was used to measure the level of health literacy in the study, which was designed in 2014 by Montazeri et al. the validity of the questionnaire has been confirmed by exploratory factor analysis. Cronbach's alpha coefficients in the related structures were also acceptable (0.72 to 0.89) and the reliability of the questionnaire was also confirmed. The ranking of health literacy levels based on the HELIA questionnaire is 0 to 50 as low, 50-66 as inadequate, 66 to 84 as adequate and 84 to 100 as high. This questionnaire has the following benefits: covering various aspects of health literacy, using simple language terms and generalities (23).

C) The World Health Organization Quality Of Life questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF):

The questionnaire assesses individuals' perceptions of value and cultural systems as well as their personal goals, standards, and concerns. The WHOQOL-BREF instrument comprises 26 items and is a shorter version of the original instrument (100 items) which measure the following 4 broad domains: physical health (7 items), psychological health (6 items), social relationships (3 items) and environment (8 items). The items of the questionnaire are also evaluated on Likert five-point scale and the answers are scored as follows: 5 = 5, 4 = 4, 3 = 3, 2 = 2 and 1 = 1. In items 3, 4 and 26, the scoring is calculated as inverse: 1 = 5, 2 = 4, 3 = 3, 4 = 2, and 5 = 1. A higher score indicates a better quality of life. In addition, this questionnaire can also assess general health. However, items 1 and 2 are solely designed to assess the perceived level of quality of life and therefore are not included in the scoring. The quality of life in each domain was determined from 0 to 100.

Nejat et al. (2006) in a study titled "Standardization of the World Health Organization's Quality of Life Questionnaire" concluded that this questionnaire is valid and has acceptable structural factors in healthy and patient groups of Iran. Also, intracluster correlation and Cronbach alpha in all domains were higher than 0.7 and in the social relation, Cronbach's alpha was 0.55. On the other hand, in 83% of cases, the correlation of each item with its main domain was higher than other domains (24). Data analysis was performed using SPSS software version 16. Initially, demographic characteristics were analyzed by descriptive statistics (Frequencies and Descriptive). Regarding the normal or abnormal quantitative variables, the T-test, and its nonparametric equivalents, the Mann-Whitney test was used. In order to examine

the qualitative variables, the Chi-square test was used and the Spearman correlation coefficient was used to examine the correlation between quantitative variables.

Results

This study was performed on 230 nurses working in Kashmar hospitals in which 86 (37.4%) were males and 144 (62.6%) were

females, 52 (22.6%) were single and 178 (77.4%) were married. The mean age of these nurses was 31.3 ± 6.82 years in the age range of 22 to 55 years which is presented in Table 1 by demographic characteristics of nurses. 218 (94.8%) had a bachelor's degree and 12 (5.2%) had a master's degree. 123 (53.5%) were very interested and 101 (43.9%) had a moderate

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the nurses by gender

Variable		Male	Female	Test result	
Age (year)	Least	23	22	Mann-Whitney: Z= -0.918 P=0.359	
	Most	55	44		
	Standard deviation \pm Mean	8.21 ± 32.38	5.76 ± 30.66		
	Total (total number of any gender)	86	144		
Marital Status	Single	19 (22.1%)	33 (22.9%)	Chi-Square: X ² =0.021 P=0.51 df: 1	
	Married	67 (77.9%)	111 (77.1%)		
Education Level	Bachelor	79 (91.9%)	139 (96.5%)	Chi-Square: X ² =2.372 P=0.110 df: 1	
	Masters	7 (8.1%)	5 (3.5%)		
Interest in nursing	No interest	4 (4.7%)	2 (1.4%)	Chi-Square: X ² =2.337 P=0.311 df: 2	
	medium	38 (44.2%)	63 (43.8%)		
	High interest	44 (51.2%)	79 (54.9%)		
Employment type	Contract	22 (25.5%)	39 (27.1%)	Chi-Square: X ² =0.062 P=0.464 df: 1	
	Employed	64 (74.4%)	105 (72.9%)		
the most Shift type	Morning	32 (37.2%)	53 (36.8%)	Chi-Square: X ² =0.131 P=0.937 df: 2	
	Evening	36 (41.9%)	58 (40.3%)		
	Night	18 (20.9%)	33 (22.9%)		
Scientific Study Hours	Least	0	0	Mann-Whitney: Z= -1.346 P=0.178	
	Most	90	90		
	Standard deviation \pm Mean	20.53 ± 12.52	17.61 ± 9.5		
Daily working hours	Least	7	7	Mann-Whitney: Z= -1.944 P=0.052	
	Most	12	12		
	Standard deviation \pm Mean	1.26 ± 8.11	0.88 ± 7.81		
Quality of Life	Standard deviation \pm Mean	0.88 ± 7.81	11.48 ± 64.38	11.55 ± 65.39	T-Test: T= 1.724 P= 0.086 df: 228
Health literacy	Standard deviation \pm Mean	10.53 ± 80.88	10.75 ± 81.05	10.65 ± 80.98	T-Test: T= -0.117 P= 0.907 df: 228

nursing interest, and only 6 (2.6%) were not interested in nursing. 61 individuals (26.5%) had contradict and 169 (73.5%) were employed. The mean amount of nurses' scientific study was 11.5 hours monthly and it is worth noting that more than 50% of nurses (127) did not have any scientific studies per month.

Approximately 37% of nurses had the highest work shift in the morning, 40.9% in the evening and 22.2% at night. Nurses worked 7.92 hours a day. The survey found that men were working 0.3 times more than women on a daily basis. Table 2 shows the quality of life values in the four domains. Based on the results, the highest score of quality of life was related to the physical health, social, psychological and environmental domains, respectively. The mean total score of nurses' quality of life was 65.59 ± 11.55 (moderate). Based on the results in Table 3 on the five dimensions of health literacy, the highest scores related to the understanding, reading, access, assessment, and decision-making-behavior dimensions, respectively. The mean nurses' health literacy score is 80.98 which is adequate. 19 individuals (8.3%) had inadequate health literacy, 121 (52.6%) had adequate health literacy and 90 (39.1%) had high health literacy. Table 4 shows that based on the Spearman correlation coefficient test, there is a significant statistical relationship between the different quality of life domains and health literacy of nurses working in Kashmar hospitals. As the level of literacy increases, the level of nurses' quality of life also improves. According to Table 1, there was no significant difference between the quality of life and the health literacy scores based on the gender of the nurses.

Table 2: Quantity of four domains and total quality of Life

Domains	Least	Most	Standard deviation \pm Mean
Physical score	32.14	100	12.55 \pm 69.47
Social score	16.67	100	16.14 \pm 66.59
Psychological score	16.67	100	14.98 \pm 64.52
Environmental score	9.38	96.88	14.62 \pm 60.99
Overall Quality of Life Score	35.90	96.54	11.55 \pm 65.39

Table 3: Quantity of five domains and total health literacy

Variable	Minimum	maximum	Standard deviation \pm Mean
Reading Score	37.5	100	14.91 \pm 81.65
Access Score	37.5	100	13.73 \pm 81.05
Understanding Score	50	100	11.69 \pm 86.36
Assessment Score	37.5	100	14.86 \pm 80.05
Decision making and Behavior Score	33.33	100	13.36 \pm 75.80
Total Health Literacy Score	46.61	100	10.65 \pm 80.98
Overall health literacy level			
Inadequate health literacy	Adequate health literacy	High health literacy	
19 Individuals (8.3%)	121 individuals (52.6%)	90 Individuals (39.1%)	

Table 4: Relationship between health literacy and quality of life domains by correlation Test

Health Literacy		Main variables	
Correlation coefficient	Sig		
0.255	P<0.001	Physical	Quality of Life Domains
0.237	P<0.001	Psychological	
0.216	P<0.01	Social	
0.322	P<0.001	Environmental	

Discussion

According to the WHO, health literacy is a global issue and plays a pivotal role in identifying health inequalities, both in rich

and poor countries, (25). The results of this study showed that with increasing level of health literacy, the level of nurse's quality of life also improved ($P < 0.05$). Based on the results, only 10% of the nurses had inadequate health literacy level and 80.2% of the nurses had a high level of health literacy (80.98%) which are not consistent with the findings of the Peyman (11), Izadirad and Zareban (8), Hoseini (26) and Tavousi (27).

The reasons for this contradiction may be the difference between the mentioned studies and present study in the statistical population; because nurses have a good understanding of health and health literacy due to their medical careers. But in the mentioned studies, the statistical population consisted of health workers, the general public and pensioners.

Regarding the quality of life, the results also showed that nurses' quality of life is not high and desirable which is consistent with the results of the Ansari (28), Nasiry (29), Fallahee Khoshknab (30) and Khaghanizadeh (31). Possible reasons for this consistency include high workload, multiple shifts and sleeping problems which reduces the quality of life. The results of this study indicate that there is a direct relationship between the level of health literacy and quality of life domains (physical, psychological, social and environmental); so that people with a higher level of health literacy had a better quality of life. These results were consistent with the studies conducted by Kooshyar (32), Macabasco-O'Connell (33), Song (34), Wallace (35), Howard (36), and Panahi (37).

Yusefi et al. (2017) in a study entitled "health literacy status and its relationship with nurses' quality of life working in educational hospitals of Shiraz University

of Medical Sciences", which was performed on 185 nurses, found that the health literacy score was 12.98 ± 70.06 and the quality of life score was 17.26 ± 60.86 . It was also found that there is a significant relationship between health literacy and quality of life in nurses and with increasing health literacy, the level of quality of life improves which is consistent with the results of the present study. Also, the level of health literacy was evaluated as adequate in and quality of life was evaluated as a medium in Yusefi study. The reasons for this consistency are the similarity of the nursing population and the same year of research in this study and mentioned study. In Yusefi et al. study, among the health literacy dimensions, the highest score was related to the understanding which is the same as the present study (38). As nurses are one of the health care groups, they need to have a desirable level of health literacy. Therefore, considering this variable along with the quality of life and trying to promote it can play an important role in the health status of patients as well as in the personal and social life of nurses (39, 40). According to research team experiences, factors such as religious beliefs, healthy nutrition, non-use of drugs and interpersonal and organizational relationships can affect the direct relationship between health literacy and quality of life.

Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, nurse's quality of life score was moderate and nurse's health literacy score was adequate. Also, there was a direct relationship between health literacy and different domains of nurse's quality of life. Therefore, more emphasis on the importance of health literacy

and the quality of life in health system policy-making and improving the quality of services is necessary. It is expected that hospital managers will take a major step toward improving health care and ultimately solve patient problems, increase the satisfaction of nurses and reduce the cost of treatment. By planning and designing useful programs in the health literacy area appropriate to nurses, effective steps can be taken to develop health literacy skills in the community and improve nurse's quality of life.

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