

# Material Health Literacy



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## Abstract

Health literacy is associated with the concept of general literacy, and people's ability to develop and make judgments about health care related issues throughout their lives, to protect, maintain and improve their health, to access health-related information resources to improve quality of life, to accurately understand and appraise health-related information and messages. Research shows that people with inadequate health literacy find it difficult to comprehend health information. Maternal health literacy can be defined as cognitive and social skills that determine the motivation and ability of women to understand and use the information they can protect, sustain and improve their health. Adequate level of women's health literacy is extremely important for the protection and promotion of both their own and their children's health. Women with low levels of health literacy will be unable to access and understand health-related information, making it difficult for both her and her family members to make the right decisions in situations that concern their health. Considering that maternal health literacy affects not only maternal health but also child health, growth and death, necessary health policies and practices should be developed to improve maternal health literacy in order to improve maternal and child health.

**Abbreviations:** Maternal health literacy; Health policy; Promotion of health; Women's SOY; Breastfeeding; Maternal hematocrit; Pregnant women; Education materials; Pregnancy changes; Health literacy

## Introduction

In the twenty-first century; there have been many developments in medicine such as finding new diagnostic and treatment methods; demographic and epidemiological transformation; changing disease burdens and increasing the burden of non-communicable diseases; increasing the importance of gaining healthy lifestyle behaviors to individuals and preventive health services rather than therapeutic health services. In addition; advances in communication technology have increased the resources for people to obtain health information and access to information has become easier. As a result of the developments both in the field of medicine and technology; the health care providers and the areas where the service is provided have increased as well as the share of health care providers-demanders in the process of making medical decisions-in the management of diseases and in the protection and improvement of their health. As a result of the changing roles of individuals regarding their health; it has led to the necessity of providing the communication between health service providers and service providers correctly and understanding all kinds of health information provided. In addition to the negativities experienced between health service providers and beneficiaries; the low level of socioeconomic level; the lack of information related to the lack of education level; and the difficulties in accessing health services cannot be adequately conveyed to the people [1, 2].

It is possible for individuals to reach their full health potential by taking control of the factors determining their health. For this; people should assume their own health responsibility and have the equipment and skills to make healthy choices based on the determinants of their health [3]. Patients constitute the main part of the health system and the decisions taken by individuals about their diseases significantly affect the effectiveness; effectiveness and quality of health care provided with health outcomes. The decisions taken by the patients are mostly based on their health-related skills; capacities and knowledge. This is called de health literacy de in the literature. Health literacy was first coined by Scott Simonds in 1974 in an article entitled "Health Education and Social Policy ". However; its widespread use in the literature began after the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) study in the USA. As a result of the studies carried out by health researchers and clinicians; the definition of health literacy was first developed and then the concept was expanded by adding alternative terms such as "medical literacy saclike; "patient health literacy" and "clinical health literacy [2-4]. Health literacy is associated with the concept of general literacy; and it is possible for people to develop and make decisions about health care issues throughout their lives; to protect; maintain and improve their health; to access health-related information resources to improve the quality of life; to perceive health-related information and messages accurately and understanding and desires [5, 6].

Health literacy is defined within the framework of the concept of health promotion [7]. The concept of health promotion was defined as 1986 the ability to control and improve the health of individuals geliştirme during the Ottawa International Conference on Health Promotion in 1986. The concept of ok health literacy ortaya has been introduced to include the factors that affect health (determinants of health) and the learning and perception of social; political and economic conditions [8]. However; its widespread use in the literature began after the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy in the United States [9]. Health literacy enables the individual to acquire the level of knowledge; individual skills and self-confidence that will lead to behavior that will improve both individual and community health by changing the lifestyle and living conditions [10]. It supports and improves the individual's ability to access the right information and service; and the ability to use this service in order to maintain and maintain health [10,11]. It strengthens the use of existing health services more effectively; the creation of quality conditions in health services; and the competence of the individual over his or her health and community health [12,13]. Research shows that people with inadequate health literacy find it difficult to comprehend health information. Inadequate health literacy has been associated with more hospitalization; greater use of emergency services; less preventive health care; poor use of medication; poor understanding of health-related messages; and a worse level of health [14,15]. Maternal health literacy can be defined as cognitive and social skills that determine the motivation and ability of women to understand and use the information they can protect; maintain and improve their own health [16]. It is known that prenatal care is important for risk assessment for a healthy maternity and to avoid complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Adequate level of women's SOY is extremely important for the protection and promotion of both their own and their children's health. Women with low levels of health literacy will have difficulty in making the right decisions in situations that concern the health of both themselves and their family members; as they will be inadequate in accessing; understanding and interpreting health information [17].

Kohan et al. [18] Examined the impact of maternal health literacy on prenatal care and pregnancy outcomes; found that women with adequate health literacy had significant positive differences in terms of prenatal care frequency; neonatal birth weight; maternal hematocrit; iron and folic acid consumption; weight gain during pregnancy; gestational age at birth; mode of delivery and breastfeeding [18]. Similarly; in the study of Ohnishi et al. [19]; They found that mothers with adequate health literacy had less low birth weight and premature infants; infant mortality was less; and breastfeeding rates were higher than the other group [19]. In some studies; it is reported that pregnant women with low health literacy levels are not adequate and regular in their follow-up; they do not have their first follow-up in time; and they do not know screening tests such as double-triple screening and glucose load test [20-22]. Increasing knowledge of the mother about pregnancy changes; care in dangerous situations and pregnancy

complications are important strategies for prenatal care and better adaptation to pregnancy. It is essential to educate and provide information on the subjects needed during pregnancy; but the most important factor is the perception; understanding and ability to use information in dangerous and inevitable situations. Therefore; it is necessary to carry out basic studies to increase maternal health literacy such as assessment in pregnancy care; identification of maternal literacy issues; identification of available resources; planning for better use of educational materials; written and oral education materials.

In most countries; information that is planned and organized in the prenatal period is given to pregnant women and their spouses through pregnancy preparation classes; and practical applications are provided to improve the ability to use and understand this information. Considering that maternal health literacy affects not only maternal health but also child health; growth and death; necessary health policies and practices should be developed to improve maternal health literacy in order to improve maternal and child health.

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