

The Impact of a Lower Health Literacy in the Self-Management of Patients with a Multiple Sclerosis: A Literature Review

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Abstract : Background: Multiple sclerosis is a chronic inflammatory autoimmune demyelinating disease that affects young adults. Multiple sclerosis is a chronic disease in which the patient needs to self-manage the disease and the therapeutic regimen. Consequently, the promotion of health literacy assumes a relevant role for the accessibility, understanding, and use of information in order to promote and maintain the health of patients with multiple sclerosis. Aim: To determine the impact of lower health literacy in the self-management of patients with a multiple sclerosis. Methods: Literature review based on a search on the following electronic databases: CINAHL and MEDLINE; comprising all results published between September 2016 and September 2021. The search strategy was: ("Self-management [MeSH]" AND "Multiple sclerosis[MeSH]" AND "Health literacy[MeSH]"). The inclusion criteria were: original papers reporting about multiple sclerosis patients; participants with age above 18 years old, written in English, Spanish, French, or Portuguese. Two independent reviewers have done the screening and analysis of the results. 38 citations were identified, and after duplicates removal, a total of 25 results were screened; 14 were included after the application of the inclusion criteria. Results: The lower health literacy in the self-management of patients with a multiple sclerosis is related to less healthy choices, riskier health behavior, poor health outcomes, decreased of adhering to the therapeutic regimen after discharge, less self-management of chronic illness, and increased the time of hospitalization. Conclusion: Inadequate levels of health literacy contribute to poor health outcomes, unsuccessful self-management of chronic illness, and inadequate adherence to the therapeutic regimen. Therefore, health literacy is important for health policy and the healthcare services, as it can be understood as a mediator of self-management of multiple sclerosis disease.

Keywords : health literacy, multiple sclerosis, review, self-management

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