

Enhancing Health Literacy in Patients with Inflammatory Bowel Disease: An Integrative Review

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Abstract : Living with inflammatory bowel disease presents challenges, primarily due to a lack of awareness and understanding of the needs. The consequences of health literacy encompass improved self-reported health status, reduced healthcare costs, increased health knowledge, shorter hospitalizations, and less frequent use of healthcare services. Enhanced health literacy enables nurses to assess their patients' levels of health literacy and identify those at risk for misunderstanding instructions, experiencing shame due to inadequate reading skills, and struggling to adhere to healthcare recommendations. Low health literacy in patients with inflammatory bowel disease can lead to poorer health outcomes and hinder adherence to treatment and health information. Health literacy refers to patients understanding, evaluating, and applying health information effectively. The objective was to explore health literacy in patients with inflammatory bowel disease. An integrative review was conducted using a systematic search of electronic databases across PubMed, CINAHL Complete (EBSCO), and Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts (ASSIA). Sixteen peer-reviewed articles published up to August 2024 were selected and analyzed according to Whittemore and Knafli's methodology. The analysis revealed three themes: knowledge level, disease-related knowledge, and compliance with knowledge and treatment. Patients with limited health literacy are associated with lower ratings of subjective health and depression in inflammatory bowel disease. Higher health literacy levels are associated with better disease management and adherence to treatment. Improved health literacy leads to better patient engagement and health behaviors. The review underscores the significance of education and knowledge that patients need to be guided to healthcare professionals and patient support organization websites. Evidence-based online educational portals and participation in educational programs can provide a better understanding of prescribed medications and health outcomes. Healthcare professionals must provide effective communication strategies and regular follow-ups to improve patients' adherence to knowledge and overall health outcome. Aspects of health literacy within the cultural perspective need to be addressed. Within a country, between countries, and between individuals, there will be variation in what is considered pleasurable when making personal choices. Effective communication strategies and regular follow-ups are essential in supporting patients' journey toward better health. Patients need to be guided to reliable sources and evidence-based educational portals. Healthcare professionals need to support and improve patients' understanding of their medications and treatment plans. It can lead to better adherence and improved health outcomes.

Keywords : health knowledge, health literacy, inflammatory bowel disease, integrative review, patient knowledge

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