

Patient Engagement in Healthcare and Health Literacy in China: A Survey in China

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Abstract : Objective: It's increasing acknowledged that patient engagement in healthcare and health literacy both have positive impact on patient outcome. Health literacy emphasizes the ability of individuals to understand and apply health information and manage health. Patients' health literacy affected their willingness to participate in decision-making, but its impact on the behavior and willingness of patient engagement in healthcare is not clear, especially in China. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the correlation between the behavior and willingness of patient engagement and health literacy. Methods: A cross-sectional survey was employed using the behavior and willingness of patient engagement in healthcare questionnaire, Chinese version All Aspects of Health Literacy Scale (AAHLS). A convenient sample of 443 patients was recruited from 8 general hospitals in Shanghai, Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province, from September 2016 to January 2017. Results: The mean score for the willingness was (4.41 ± 0.45) , and the mean score for the patient engagement behavior was (4.17 ± 0.49) ; the mean score for the patient's health literacy was (2.36 ± 0.29) the average score of its three dimensions- the functional literacy, the Communicative/interactive literacy and the Critical literacy, was (2.26 ± 0.38) , (2.28 ± 0.42) , and (2.61 ± 0.43) , respectively. Patients' health literacy was positively correlated with their willingness of engagement ($r = 0.367$, $P < 0.01$), and positively correlated with patient engagement behavior ($r = 0.357$, $P < 0.01$). All dimensions of health literacy were positively correlated with the behavior and willingness of patient engagement in healthcare; the dimension of Communicative/interactive literacy ($r = 0.312$, $P < 0.01$; $r = 0.357$, $P < 0.01$) and the Critical literacy ($r = 0.357$, $P < 0.01$; $r = 0.357$, $P < 0.01$) are more relevant to the behavior and willingness than the dimension of basic/functional literacy ($r = 0.150$, $P < 0.01$; $r = 0.150$, $P < 0.01$). Conclusions: The behavior and willingness of patient engagement in healthcare are positively correlated with health literacy and its dimensions. In clinical work, medical staff should pay attention to patients' health literacy, especially the situation that low literacy leads to low participation and provide health information to patients through health education or communication to improve their health literacy as well as guide them to actively and rationally participate in their own health care.

Keywords : patient engagement, health literacy, healthcare, correlation

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