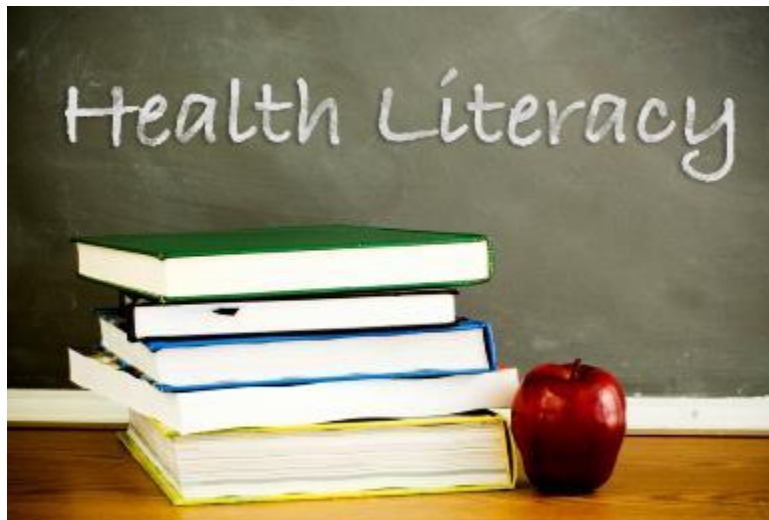


HEALTH LITERACY

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Health literacy is a stronger predictor of an individual's health status than

- income
- employment status
- education level
- racial or ethnic group

Definition

People's knowledge, motivation and competences to access, understand, evaluate and use health information in order to make judgements and take decisions concerning health care, disease prevention and health promotion

European Health Literacy Consortium (2012)

Components

Health literacy	Access or obtain information relevant to health	Understand information relevant to health	Appraise, judge or evaluate information relevant to health	Apply or use information relevant to health
Health care	1) Ability to access information on medical or clinical issues	2) Ability to understand medical information and derive meaning	3) Ability to interpret and evaluate medical information	4) Ability to make informed decisions on medical issues
Disease prevention	5) Ability to access information on risk factors	6) Ability to understand information on risk factors and derive meaning	7) Ability to interpret and evaluate information on risk factors	8) Ability to judge the relevance of the information on risk factors
Health promotion	9) Ability to update oneself on health issues	10) Ability to understand health-related information and derive meaning	11) Ability to interpret and evaluate information on health-related issues	12) Ability to form a reflected opinion on health issues

Includes

understanding what doctors say



assessing whether health information
in the mass media is reliable



Includes

understanding information on prescriptions and medication

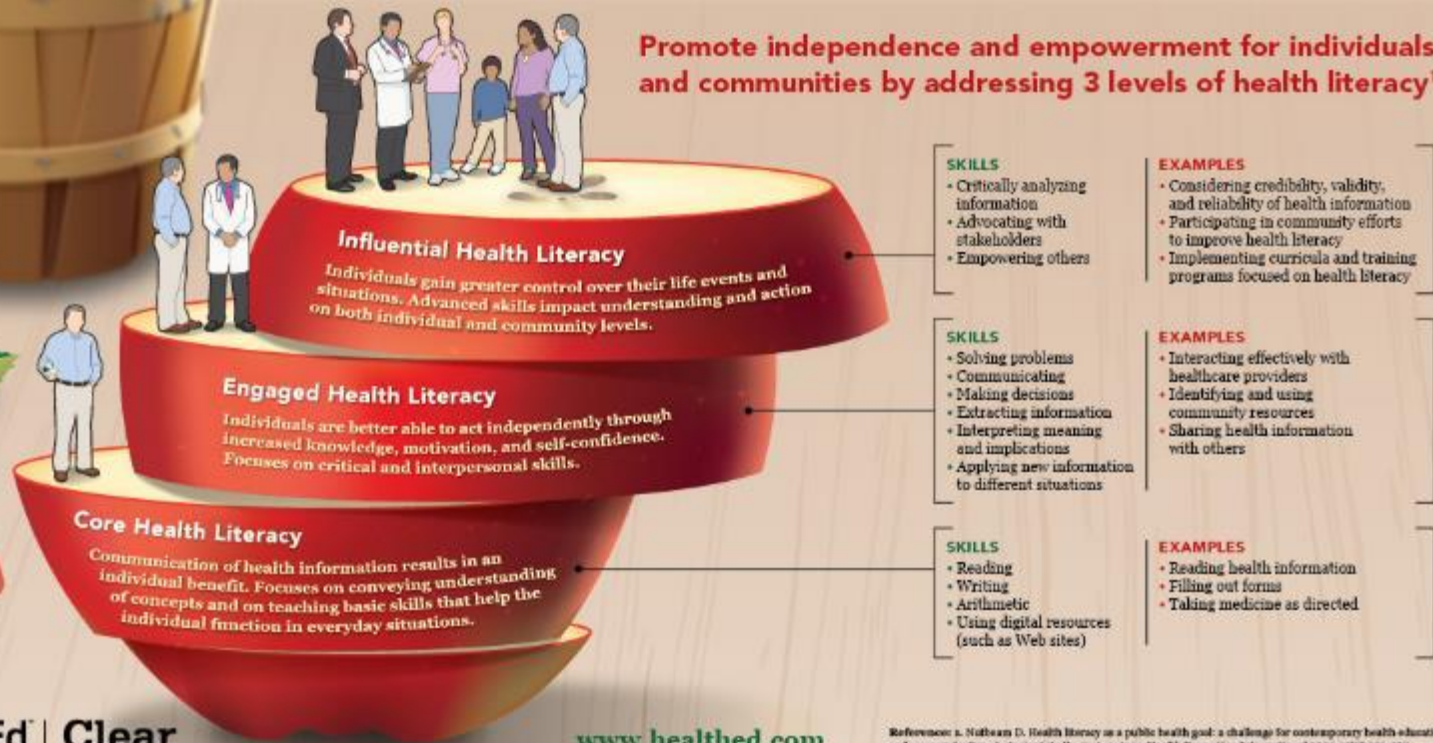


understanding information on food packaging

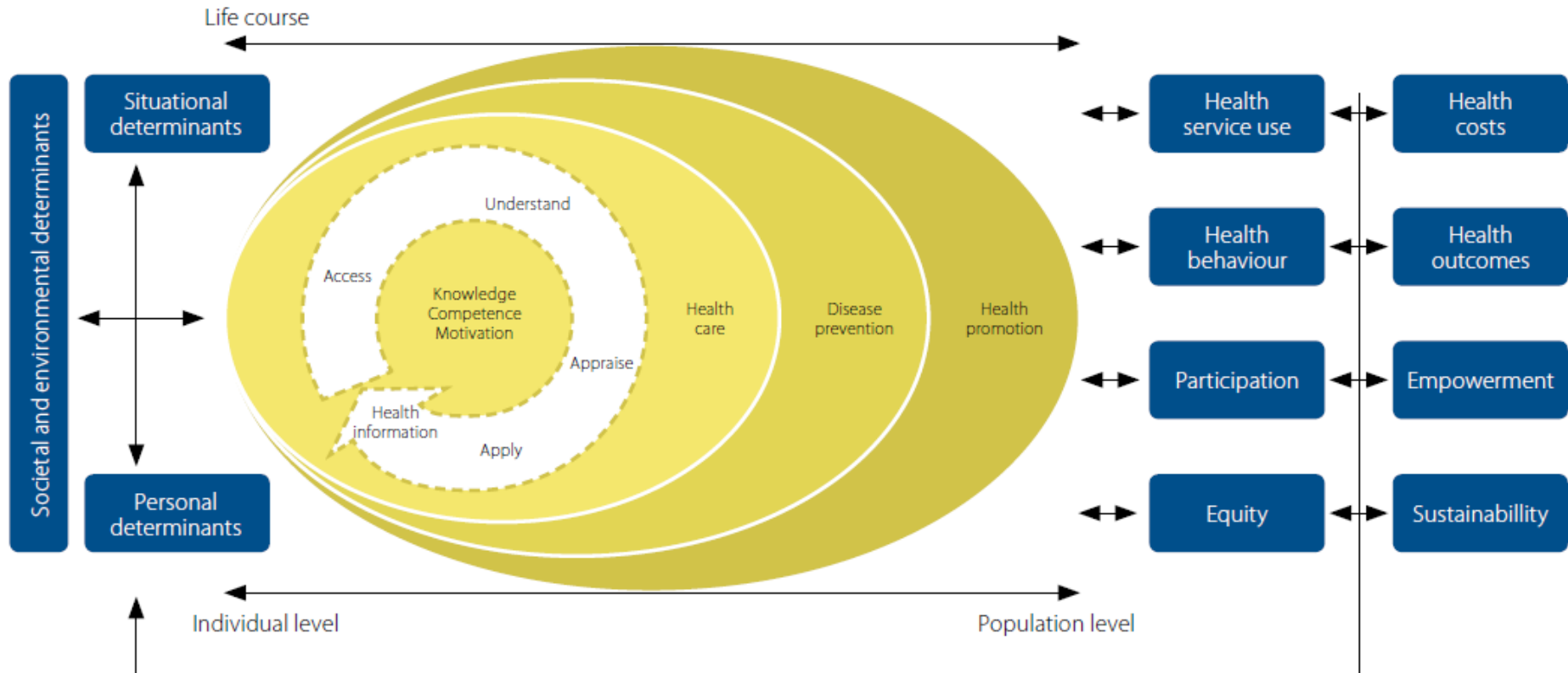


Health Literacy: Moving Beyond the Core

Promote independence and empowerment for individuals and communities by addressing 3 levels of health literacy¹



Conceptual model of HL



Importance

- every individual confront health decisions
- people are challenged to make healthy lifestyle choices
- health care systems are increasingly difficult to navigate
- medical terminology is hard to understand
- education systems fail to equip people with HL skills

modern societies market

unhealthy products



unhealthy lifestyles



Importance

- empowers and enables people to make sound health decisions
- influences self-assessed health
- builds resilience among individuals and communities

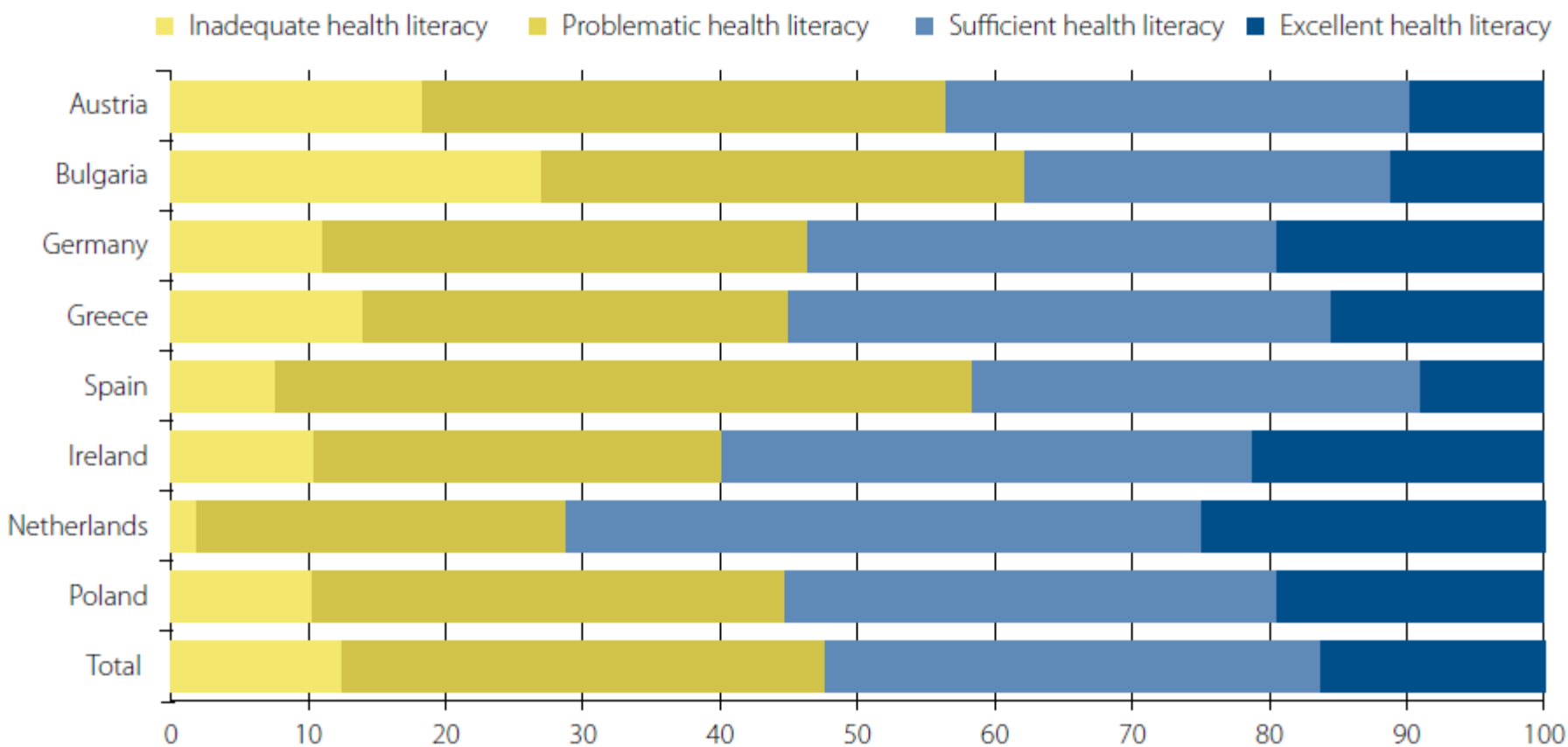


Inadequate HL

- riskier health choices (higher smoking rates)
- more work accidents
- diminished management of chronic diseases (e.g. diabetes)
- poor adherence to medication
- increased hospitalization and rehospitalization
- higher health system costs
- increased morbidity and premature death

Surveys indicate limited HL levels

Nearly half of adults in European countries have limited health literacy skills



How to enhance HL?

- multiple stakeholders need to be involved (is not only the responsibility of the health sector)
- cooperation among stakeholders necessary
- initiatives to build HL must be grounded in the settings of everyday life
- plain-language initiatives need to be developed
- investment in measurement and research is needed

Major stakeholders



Libraries as stakeholders

- providing meaningful and reliable health information
- introducing health information materials which are sensitive to differences and diversity in cultures, gender and age
- introducing OA health sources
- providing sources to help with understanding medical terminology
- teaching how to find and where to find health information (introducing appropriate databases, websites etc.)
- teaching how to evaluate credentials of information sources (media, web, print, etc.)

Connection with IL

- IL is a set of skills to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand



HL = IL + health context

- libraries have a long tradition to teach IL skills
- they can help with developing HL skills

Thanks

HEALTH
LITERACY
MONTH
OCTOBER 2013

