In the last decade, researchers have developed dozens of tools to measure an individual's health literacy. CommunicateHealth supported the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Library of Medicine (NLM) in creating a repository for some of these health literacy tools. The resulting Health Literacy Tool Shed (HLTS) is an interactive, one-stop shop for researchers and practitioners to find quantitative tools to conduct research and evaluate health literacy interventions.

The HLTS includes details on more than 100 instruments. Practitioners can review and select the right tools for their specific context and easily access the tools and corresponding instructions.

The HLTS is for health literacy researchers and practitioners — especially program evaluators.

The team used an iterative user-centered design approach to develop the HLTS, soliciting user input to inform:

- Content organization
- Interactive filtering features
- Involvement of tool creators on the website

Health literacy experts reviewed over 100 publications on health literacy measurement tools to identify those that met inclusion criteria. The HLTS focuses on tools that measure an individual's health literacy. Measures that assess the complexity of the health care system, provider communication skills, or other facets of organizations or materials are not included. Additional tools that meet the criteria will be added over time.

By engaging researchers and practitioners in every step of HLTS development, CommunicateHealth and the HLTS team created a website that’s easy to understand and use. Suggestions from website users will inform new features and determine priorities for expansion of the website, such as allowing tool creators to submit additional measures for expert review.

The HLTS includes links to directly download measures when available. If the measure isn’t available on the HLTS, you can request it from the author.

Easily search and compare measures

Begin by looking for measures of health literacy in a specific context (e.g., cancer, diabetes, or dental health).

Add additional filters to find a measure that fits your needs — like one that takes less than 5 minutes to administer, is phone-based, or is available in Cantonese.

Find out more about your measure

Once you’ve found a tool to measure health literacy, get a quick overview of the tool’s properties. You can also see if it’s been validated with populations similar to the ones you serve.

Get direct access to measures and instructions

The HLTS includes links to directly download measures when available. If the measure isn’t available on the HLTS, you can request it from the author.

Help the HLTS grow

We’re making it easier for users to suggest new measures for the site. Use the improved submission form to add new measures to the site — and help the HLTS grow. In the coming year, we’re planning to add up to 70 additional measures, and we’re building new features for better access to related measures and publications.

Visit the Health Literacy Tool Shed at http://healthliteracy.bu.edu