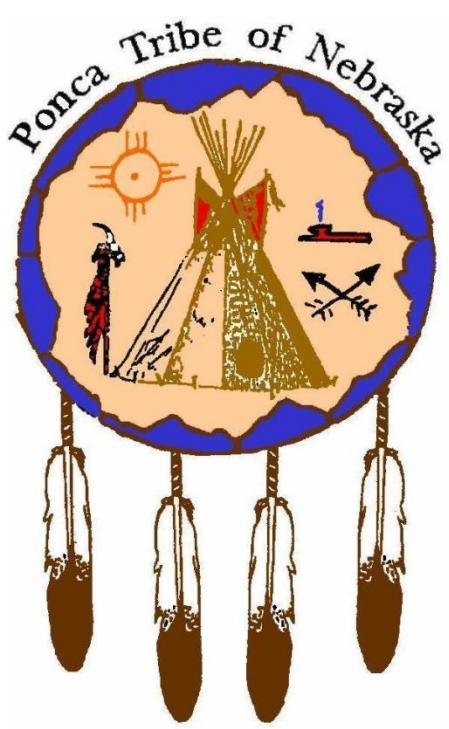


Health Literacy Assessment in a Sample of Urban Native American Parents

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Background

- Many significant health disparities exist among Native American children compared to their counterparts from other racial and ethnic groups.
- Low caregiver literacy is also associated with poor preventive care behaviors and poor child health outcomes.
- Improving parents' health literacy skills can improve their knowledge and behaviors as well as their children's health outcomes.
- Few studies have examined parental health literacy in Native Americans.
- We assessed the health literacy of Native American parents of 2-17 year olds in an urban outpatient setting.

Hypothesis

- Native American parents will demonstrate low health literacy, compared to published national estimates of health literacy.

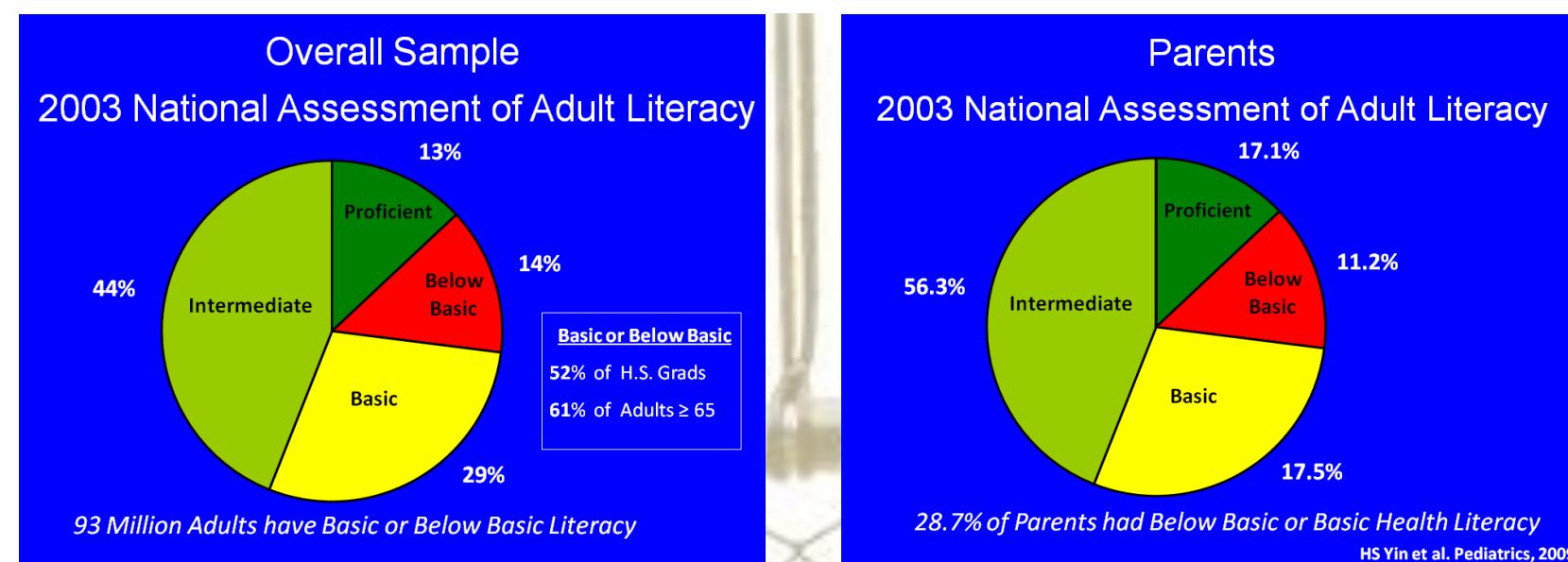
Methods and Analysis

- Parents of 2-17 year olds presenting to an outpatient facility serving enrolled members of Native American tribes were recruited from the clinic waiting room.
- After informed consent was obtained, a trained interviewer collected demographic, height, weight, blood pressure data. The Short form of the Test of Functional Health Literacy (STOFHLA) was administered to each participant.
- Analysis was performed using SAS version 9.2 (Cary, NC).
- The Mantel-Haenszel Chi-Square Test, Kruskal-Wallis test, the Kendall Tau-b correlation coefficient, and one-way ANOVA models were used to examine differences in STOFHLA score groups based on demographic and clinical variables.

Results

Characteristic	No. (%) of Participants (total n=81)
Sex	
Female	69.0 (85%)
Age - Mean (SD)	34.6 (10.0)
Education	
Some High School	24 (29.6%)
High School Graduate/GED	24 (29.6%)
Some College/2-Year Degree	29 (35.8%)
4-Year College Graduate or More	4 (4.9%)
Health Coverage	
Yes	40 (49.3%)
Annual Household Income	
Less than \$10,000	14 (17.3%)
\$10,000-\$29,999	13 (16.0%)
\$30,000 or above	14 (17.3%)
No Response	40 (49.4%)
Health Literacy Score (S-TOFHLA)	
Adequate (23-36)	78 (96.3%)
Marginal (17-22)	2 (2.5%)
Inadequate (<17)	1 (1.2%)
Body Mass Index	
Normal Weight (18.5–24.9)	11 (13.6%)
Overweight (25–29.9)	24 (29.6%)
Obese (≥ 30)	46 (56.8%)

Parental Health Literacy in Prior Studies



Conclusions

- This is the first study to report health literacy for urban Native American parents.
- Health literacy scores in this sample were not predicted by any demographic variable or associated with any clinical outcome examined.
- Health literacy scores in this sample were higher than nationally reported.
- Additional studies should examine health literacy among Native American parents.

Implications for Practice

- Assessing parental health literacy is important for improving child health outcomes.
- Factors beyond health literacy such as health-learning capacity (the cognitive and psychosocial skills from which parents must draw to effectively promote, protect, and manage their own or a child's health) are important for effective parent health education.
- Examining health literacy and health learning capacity in high-risk populations with unique cultures can play an important role in improving care and promoting health for their children.