



## Background

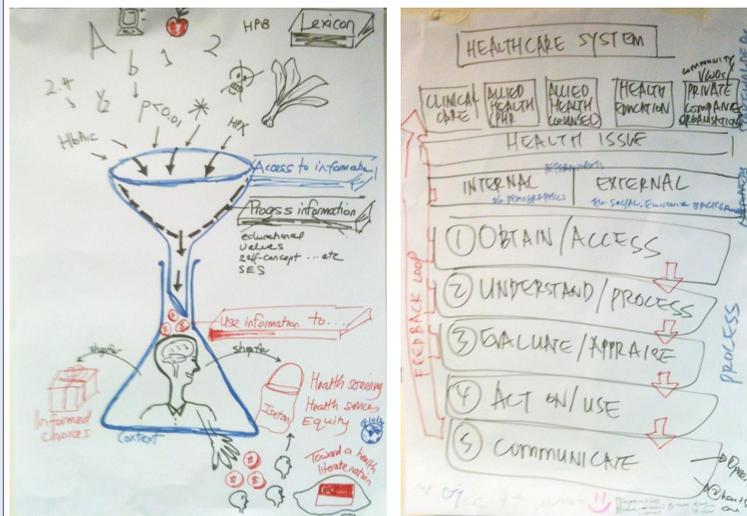
Singapore has a high level of literacy, with almost 96% of its population aged 15 and above being literate.<sup>1</sup> However as evidence demonstrates, this does not always translate into high levels of health literacy and consequently, better health outcomes.

Singapore is a multi-racial nation with a rapidly ageing population. The need to ensure that Singaporeans are health literate is urgent given its increasing burden of chronic disease and growing healthcare costs.

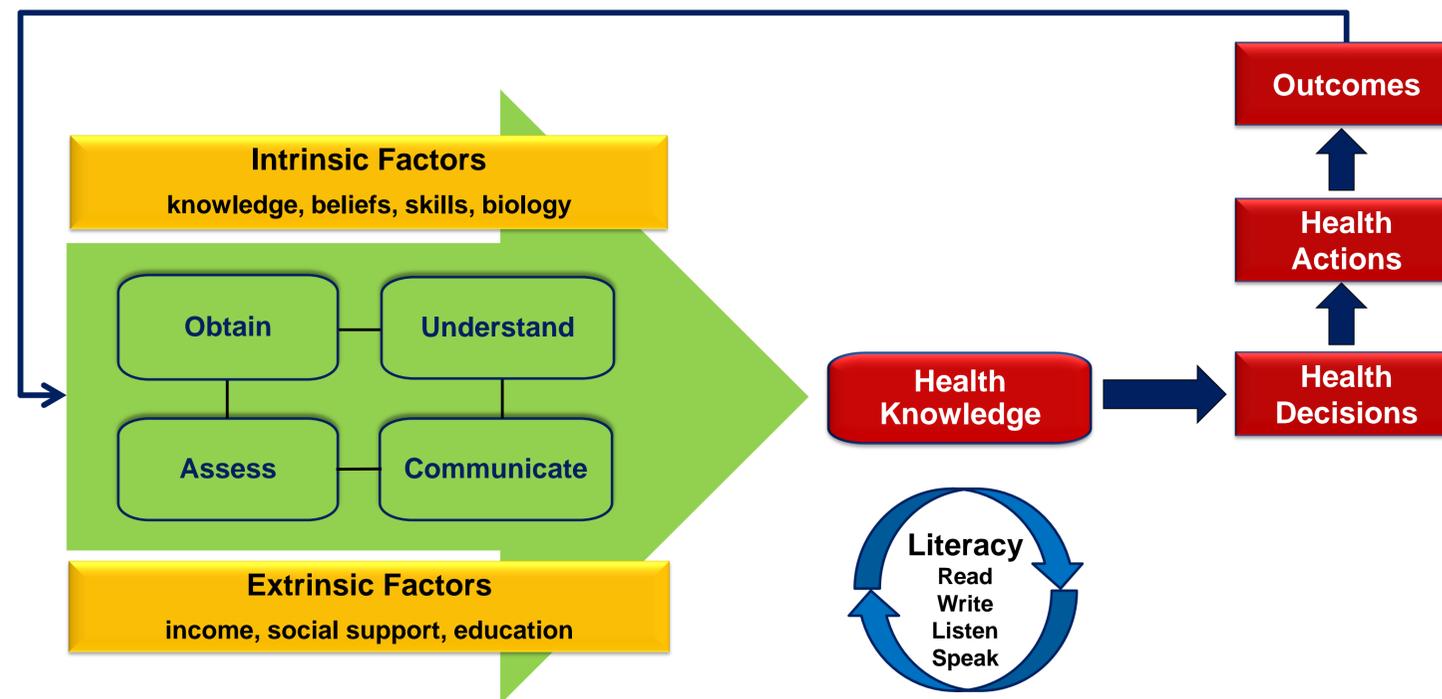
## The Action Plan

In 2010 the Health Promotion Board (HPB), in consultation with Dr. Wayne Mitic, developed an Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy in Singapore.

The Plan defines health literacy as ‘the degree to which people have the ability to obtain, understand, assess and communicate the health information and services needed to guide them in making health-related decisions. These decisions occur at home, at work, in school in the healthcare system and in society as a whole.’<sup>2</sup>



## Health Literacy Framework



## Goals and Priority Actions for Implementation

### Goals

- To put in place an infrastructure that supports the core elements necessary to lead, coordinate, build capacity and evaluate health literacy initiatives, services and policies in Singapore
- To enhance the health status and quality of life of the people in Singapore by putting in place health literacy initiatives that influence individuals, providers and systems

### Priority Actions for Implementation

- Incorporate health literacy improvement in mission, planning and evaluation
- Support health literacy research, evaluation, training and practice
- Conduct formative, process and outcome evaluation to design and assess materials, messages and resources
- Enhance dissemination of timely, accurate and appropriate health information to health professionals and the public – Plain Language Guidelines
- Design health literacy improvements to healthcare and public health systems that enhance access to health services

## An Integrated Approach



## A Health Literate Singapore

Our vision for a health literate Singapore is a nation where people can find, understand and use information and services that will guide them in making informed health decisions that enhance their quality of life.

As a step towards achieving this, HPB is:

- Developing a Plain Language Guide
- Developing a tool to establish a baseline and measure levels of health literacy
- Setting up a multiagency committee on Health Literacy with partners across the Government



## Bibliography and Acknowledgements

- Department of Statistics, Singapore, Yearbook of Statistics, 2009. <http://www.singstat.gov.sg/pubn/reference/yos09/yos2009.pdf>
- The definition is adopted by the HPB Health Literacy Team, in consultation with Dr. Wayne Mitic. Original definition developed by Rootman, I. (2006) in The Development and validation of measures of health literacy in different populations. Vancouver. University of British Columbia

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