

Diana Gonzalez, MPH, CHES, Rachel Roberts, MPH, CHES
Institute for Healthcare Advancement

Introduction

Americans over the age of 65 are the fastest growing age group in the United States with the numbers estimated to nearly double by 2025 (3). As the population ages, the incidence and prevalence rates of chronic disease are also expected to increase. Older adults also constitute the largest age group with limited literacy skills, which is linked to poor health outcomes (1) (5) (2). Health interventions that integrate low-literacy print materials are proven to enhance comprehension thus preventing or delaying the onset of chronic disease and improving health outcomes (1)(4).

Background

In response, the Institute for Healthcare Advancement (IHA) produced the What To Do For Senior Health self-care book which is written at a 3rd to 5th grade reading level. IHA also created a Senior Kit containing support resources based on the subject matter discussed in the senior health book, such as informative pamphlets, and items including a nightlight, pill box, and toothbrush.

Objectives

Older adults were asked to participate in formative research on the Senior Kit in order to:

1. Identify the relevance of each item to senior health.
2. Measure participant satisfaction with each item contained in the Senior Kit.
3. Assess the effectiveness of the tool kit resources based on the participant's ability to use them.

Collaborative Team

- **California State University, Fullerton**- Student Volunteer
- **La Habra Community Resource Center**- Senior Citizen Resident Volunteer
- **City of La Habra**- Logistical Support
- **Boone County Council On Aging**- Logistical Support
- **Occupational Therapy Geriatric Group, Department of Rehabilitation Science at the University of Buffalo**- Fall Risk Assessment
- **Rebecca Sudore, MD**- Advance Health Care Directive
- **Center to Advance Palliative Care**- Palliative Care Information Sheet
- **CareMore**- pillbox and lip balm

Contact

Rachel Roberts, MPH, CHES
Institute for Healthcare Advancement
Email: rroberts@iha4health.org
Website: www.iha4health.org
Phone: (562)690-4001



Figure 1. Photograph of the Senior Kit

Approach

Older adults were contacted via telephone interviews, focus groups, and community outreach to provide input on the Senior Kit contents and offer suggestions on items they would like to see included in the kit.

- Residents of Belvidere, IL
- Residents of La Habra, CA

• 17 Total Participants

Phone Interviews



- La Habra, CA (Afternoon)
- La Habra, CA (Morning)

• 15 Total Participants

Focus Groups



- Senior Health Fair

• 127 Total participants

Community Outreach



Figure 2. Photographs from Senior Health Fair in La Habra, CA.

Outcomes

Overall, the participants were satisfied with the Senior Kit contents. They were extremely satisfied with the What To Do For Senior Health self-care book and the Advance Directive content and design. The participants offered useful suggestions to improve Palliative Care and Fall Prevention booklet. They also recommended changing several items in the kit that were hard to open and difficult to see. They proposed adding useful items, such as supplements and behavioral health information. Also, facilitators noted that the kit prompted participants to take actions toward preventative care such as installing nightlights and talking with family about fall risks. Below is a list of items included in the kit with the participants' suggestions.

Great resource for illnesses, good information for low income seniors, good diagrams and illustrations, need information on simple exercises

Easy to read and follow, not intimidating, recommend two copies to share with their kids

Very repetitive, focus should be repair not remodel, add grab bar location, add importance of shoes

Needs better explanation, add information on insurance coverage and who needs this care

Prefer clear, day of the week should be a dark color, round ones are better for travel

Should have SPF and a twist off cap for people with arthritis

Prefer sensitive formula

Need for dry mouth due to medication

Should have auto sensor, clapper capabilities and LED light, first night light and plugged it in right away

Vitamins, first-aid kit, jar opener, ways to get out of the house, information on loneliness and depression

Future Steps

Based on these findings, the *How to Prevent Falls in Your Home: Fall Risk Guide* was modified using health literacy principles. IHA plans to add supplementary items and switch brands that were difficult to use, such as the lip balm. The Senior Kit can also be tailored to meet the needs of the distribution location and the surrounding communities. More research is needed on the extent to which such a tool influences preventative care behavior.

References

1. Bennett, I. M., Chen, J., Soroui, J. S., and White, S. (2009). The contribution of health literacy to disparities in Self-Rated health status and preventive health behaviors in older adults. *The Annals of Family Medicine*, 7(3):204-211.
2. Dall TM, Gallo PD, Chakrabarti R, et al. An aging population and growing disease burden will require a large and specialized health care workforce by 2025. *Health Aff (Millwood)* 2013;32:2013-2020.
3. Ortman JM, Velkoff VA, Hogan H. In: An aging nation: the older population in the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau; 2014. Report No.: Current Population Reports, P25-1140
4. Serper, M., Patzer, R. E., Curtis, L. M., Smith, S. G., O'Connor, R., Baker, D. W. and Wolf, M. S. (2014). Health Literacy, Cognitive Ability, and Functional Health Status among Older Adults. *Health Services Research*, 49: 1249-1267. doi: 10.1111/1475-6773.12154
5. Wolf MS, Gazmararian JA, Baker DW. Health Literacy and Functional Health Status Among Older Adults. *Arch Intern Med*.2005;165(17):1946-1952. doi:10.1001/archinte.165.17.1946.