

HEAR (*Health Evidence Awareness Report*)

In this issue

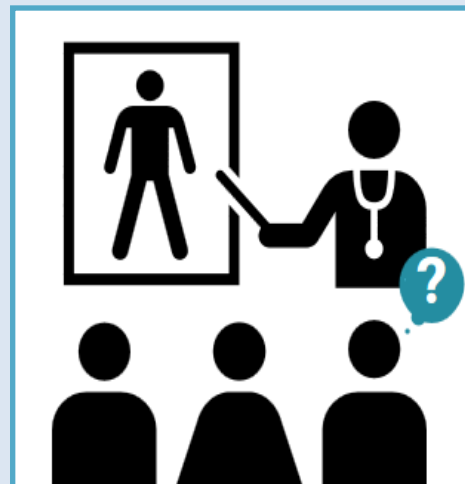
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Focus on Health Literacy

Welcome to the third issue of HEAR for 2017. The purpose of HEAR is to provide specialised information to health professionals, patients and the public about key health topics. Each issue is the result of the collaborative effort of librarians from health organisations across Ireland.

This month, the focus is on **Health Literacy (HL)**. This is a subject which can affect us all. If you have ever struggled to understand medical information or if you are a healthcare professional who has found it difficult to convey an important healthcare message, then this edition is for you.

Should you wish to make any suggestions for future editions of HEAR, we would love to hear from you, so please [email us](#).



All Images created on [Canva](#) unless stated otherwise

So what is health literacy?

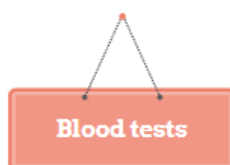
“Health literacy is the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health

Decisions.”

(National Library of Medicine Current Bibliographies in Medicine: Health Literacy (PDF Download Available) [WWW Document], n.d. . ResearchGate. URL <https://www.researchgate.net/>

FAST FACTS on Health Literacy

1 in 10 Irish people have taken the wrong dose of medication because they didn't understand the instructions.



2 in 3 Irish people admit to sometimes not being able to understand signs in hospitals.

1 in 5 Irish people are not fully confident that they understand all the information they receive from their healthcare professional.



1 in 4 Irish people said that being embarrassed was the main reason for not seeking more information from a healthcare professional.

[NALA Irish health literacy research 2007, 2015](#)

Become Health Literate


Resources to help improve your own health literacy

Free online course

 [Making Sense of Health Evidence: The Informed Consumer](https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/informed-health-consumer)


FutureLearn (2017). Cardiff University.
Retrieved from <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/informed-health-consumer>

Accessing online information

 [Finding and Evaluating Online Resources](https://nccih.nih.gov/health/webresources)

National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (2014). Retrieved from <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/webresources>

General guide

 [Health Literacy: A summary for Consumers](#)

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2017). Sydney: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

Picture guide

 [Health Literacy Infographics](#)

Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care (2017). Sydney: Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care

patients with low HEALTH LITERACY...



Are more likely to visit an
EMERGENCY ROOM



Have more
HOSPITAL STAYS



Are less likely to follow
TREATMENT PLANS



Have higher
MORTALITY RATES

www.cdc.gov/phpr



Reports

Who is doing work in this area?



 [Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Wellbeing 2013 – 2025](#)

Department of Health (2013). Dublin: Department of Health

 [Health Literacy in Ireland: Benchmarking the Present State of the Art and Examining Future Challenges and Opportunities](#)

National Adult Literacy Agency (2012). Dublin: NALA.

 [WHO Health Literacy the Solid Facts](#)

World Health Organisation (2013). Copenhagen :WHO

 [Communicate Health Green Paper When It Comes to Health Information... Plain Language Is Not Enough](#)

Communicate Health (2013). Northampton: Communicate Health

 [Making it Easy: A Health Literacy Action Plan for Scotland](#)

NHS Scotland (2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.thehealthwell.info/node/774288>

 [Investing in health literacy POLICY BRIEF 19. What do we know about the co-benefits to the education sector of actions targeted at children and young people?](#)

McDaid, D. (2016). Copenhagen :WHO

 [Making Health Communication Programs Work A Planners Guide](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2004). Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.gov/publications/health-communication>

Guidelines and Toolkits for practitioners

So how can we communicate better? Here are some guidelines on Health Literacy.



Guide to plain English in general

[Universal Design Toolkit for Customer Engagement –Written Communication](#)

National Disability Authority (2014). Dublin: NDA.

How to make medical information simple to understand

[Plain Language Style Guide for Documents](#)

Health Service Executive (2009). Kildare: HSE.

[Guidance - Communicating in plain English, Adults](#)

Health Information and Quality Authority and National Adult Literacy Agency (2015). Dublin: HIQA.

[Literacy Audit for Healthcare Settings](#)

Health Service Executive and National Adult Literacy Agency (2009). Dublin: NALA.

[Everyday Words for Public Health Communication](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). Georgia: CDC.

[How to write medical information in plain English](#)

Plain English Campaign (2001). Derbyshire: Plain English Campaign.



[Image by qdsteam via Flickr](#)

How to check if your document is health literacy friendly

[A plain English checklist for documents](#)

National Adult Literacy Agency (2005-2008). Dublin: NALA.

[The CDC Clear Communication Index](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex>

Making web information health literacy friendly

[Health Literacy Online A Guide for Simplifying the User Experience](#)

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (2016). Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthliteracyonline>

Comprehensive Toolkits

[Tasmanian Government Health Literacy Toolkit](#)

Department of Health and Human Service (2014). Retrieved from http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/about_us/health_literacy/health_literacy_toolkit

[AHRQ Health Literacy Universal Precautions Toolkit](#)

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (2015). Maryland: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

[The Health Literacy Place](#)

NHS Education for Scotland (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.healthliteracyplace.org.uk/>

Guidelines and Toolkits for Practitioners

So how can we communicate better? Here are some guidelines on Health Literacy



Health Literacy and communities

[The Ophelia Approach](#)

Deakin University. (2017). Retrieved from <https://www.ophelia.net.au> (requires free registration)

Communicating health information with children

[Guidance - Communicating in plain English for Children](#)

Health Information and Quality Authority and National Adult Literacy Agency (2015). Dublin: HIQA

[School Nurse Toolkit \(child health literacy\)](#)

Association for Young People's Health (2016). London: AYPH



[Image \[Public domain\], via Pixabay](#)

Communicating health information with elderly people

[Quick Guide to Health Literacy and Older Adults](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2007). Retrieved from <https://health.gov/communication/literacy/olderadults/default.htm>

Evaluating Health Literacy practices

[Digital inclusion evaluation toolkit](#)

Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2017). London: Department for Culture, Media & Sport

[The Teach-Back Method](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.ahrq.gov/professionals/quality-patient-safety/quality-resources/tools/literacy-toolkit/healthlittoolkit2-tool5.html>

[Attributes of a Health Literate Organization](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). Georgia: CDC

Irish quality marks

How to recognise health literacy friendly initiatives



NALA Plain English Mark

NALA provide a plain English accreditation of documents and websites. To find out more click [here](#)



The Crystal Clear Mark

Recognises pharmacies and general practices that deliver a health literacy friendly service to their customers. To find out more click [here](#)

EU Health Literacy Survey



Ireland was one of eight European countries who took part in the European Health Literacy Survey. Click on the links below to find out more.

[Health literacy in Europe: comparative results of the European health literacy survey \(HLS-EU\)](#)

Sørensen, K., Pelikan, J.M., Röthlin, F., Ganahl, K., Slonska, Z., Doyle, G., Fulam, J., Kondilis, B., Agraftiotis, D., Ueters, E., Falcon, M., Mensing, M., Tchamov, K., van den Broucke, S., Brand, H., 2015. (HLS-EU). Eur. J. Public Health 25, 1053–1058. doi:10.1093/eurpub/ckv043

[The European Health Literacy Survey: Results from Ireland.](#)

Doyle, Gerardine, Kenneth Cafferkey, and J. Fullam. Dublin, Ireland: University College Dublin 2012.

Irish Research

Irish evidence -why Health Literacy is important

[Health literacy and the perception of risk in a breast cancer family history clinic.](#)

Rutherford, E.J., Kelly, J., Lehane, E.A., Livingstone, V., Cotter, B., Butt, A., O'Sullivan, M.J., Connell, F.O., Redmond, H.P., Corrigan, M.A., 2016. The Surgeon O. doi:10.1016/j.surge.2016.06.003

[The relevance of context in understanding health literacy skills: Findings from a qualitative study. Health Expectations.](#)

McKenna, V.B., Sixsmith, J., Barry, M.M., 2017. Health Expect. Int. J. Public Particip. Health Care Health Policy. doi:10.1111/hex.12547

[Breast reconstruction post mastectomy-Let's Google it. Accessibility, readability and quality of online information.](#)

Lynch, N.P., Lang, B., Angelov, S., McGarrigle, S.A., Boyle, T.J., Al-Azawi, D., Connolly, E.M., 2017. Breast Edinb. Scotl. 32, 126–129. doi:10.1016/j.breast.2017.01.019

[Effects on engagement and health literacy outcomes of web-based materials promoting physical activity in people with diabetes: an international randomized trial.](#)

Muller, I., Rowsell, A., Stuart, B., Hayter, V., Little, P., Ganahl, K., Müller, G., Doyle, G., Chang, P., Lyles, C.R., Nutbeam, D., Yardley, L., 2017. J. Med. Internet Res. 19, e21. doi:10.2196/jmir.6601

[An exploration of strategies used by older people to obtain information about health and social care services in the community.](#)

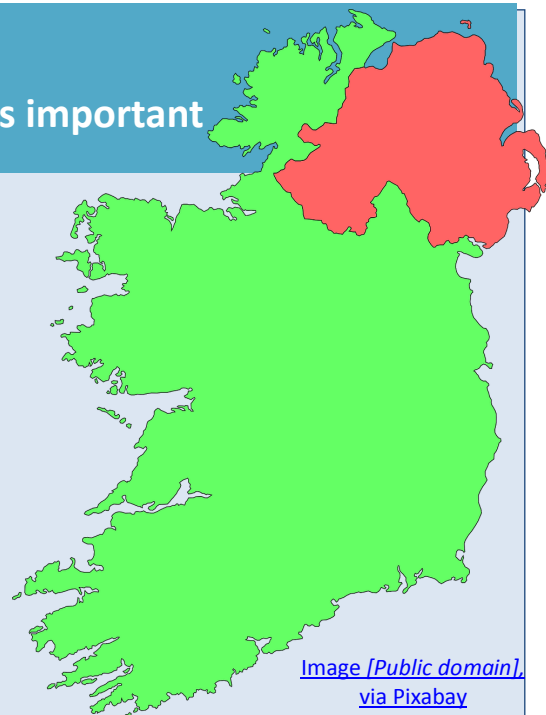
Mc Grath, M., Clancy, K., Kenny, A., 2016. Health Expect. 19, 1150–1159. doi:10.1111/hex.12408

[Self-Management Skills in Chronic Disease Management What Role Does Health Literacy Have?](#)

Mackey, L.M., Doody, C., Werner, E.L., Fullen, B., 2016. Med. Decis. Mak. Int. J. Soc. Med. Decis. Mak. 36, 741–759. doi:10.1177/0272989X16638330

[Health Literacy Mediates the Relationship between Age and Health Outcomes in Patients with Heart Failure.](#)

Wu, J.-R., Moser, D.K., DeWalt, D.A., Rayens, M.K., Dracup, K., 2016. Clinical Perspective. Circ. Heart Fail. 9, e002250. doi:10.1161/CIRCHEARTFAILURE.115.002250



[Image \[Public domain\] via Pixabay](#)

Top Tips

For effective communication

Write numbers one to nine in words and use digits for number 10 and upwards.

[\(NSAI, 2013\)](#)

Try to keep sentences to 15 –20 words.

[\(NALA, 2005-2008\)](#)

Put complex information into bullet points.

[\(Plain English Campaign, 2001\)](#)

Paragraphs should not contain more than six sentences.

[\(HSE, NALA, 2009\)](#)

Avoid capital letters. When you want to emphasise a heading or paragraph of text use a bigger size or bold.

[\(HIQA, NALA, 2015\)](#)

(Extracts from reports on pages 3 & 4)

Reviews

Analysing the existing research



[Comprehensibility of Health-Related Documents for Older Adults with Different Levels of Health Literacy: A Systematic Review](#)

Jagt, R.K. van 't, Hoeks, J.C.J., Jansen, C.J.M., Winter, A.F. de, Reijneveld, S.A., 2016. . J. Health Commun. 21, 159–177. doi:10.1080/10810730.2015.1049306

[Interentions for enhancing consumers' online health literacy.: Cochrane Systematic Review](#)

Car, J., Lang, B., Colledge, A., Ung, C., Majeed, A., 2011. . John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. doi:10.1002/14651858.CD007092.pub2

[Dr Google and the Consumer: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Navigational Needs and Online Health Information-Seeking Behaviors of Consumers With Chronic Health Conditions.](#)

Lee, K., Hoti, K., Hughes, J.D., Emmerton, L., 2014. J. Med. Internet Res. 16. doi:10.2196/jmir.3706

[Health literacy in the eHealth era: A systematic review of the literature.](#)

Kim, H., Xie, B., 2017. . Patient Educ. Couns. 100, 1073–1082. doi:10.1016/j.pec.2017.01.015

[Patient web portals, disease management, and primary prevention. Risk Management and Healthcare Policy.](#)

Coughlin, S.S., Prochaska, J.J., Williams, L.B., Besenyi, G.M., Heboyen, V., Goggans, D.S., Yoo, W., De Leo, G., 2017. 10, 33–40. doi:10.2147/RMHP.S130431

[A systematic review of interventions to improve medication information for low health literate populations.](#)

Wali, H., Hudani, Z., Wali, S., Mercer, K., Grindrod, K., 2016. . Res. Soc. Adm. Pharm. 12, 830–864. doi:10.1016/j.sapharm.2015.12.001

[The health literate health care organization 10 item questionnaire \(HLHO-10\): development and validation.](#)

Kowalski, C., Lee, S.-Y.D., Schmidt, A., Wesselmann, S., Wirtz, M.A., Pfaff, H., Ernstmann, N., 2015HLHO-10): development and validation. BMC Health Serv. Res. 15, 47. doi:10.1186/s12913-015-0707-5



Health Literacy

– Key Drivers



Benefits of Health Literacy

Having strong health literacy and numeracy means:

- I am more confident to ask questions
- I understand how to manage chronic health conditions
- I make sound health decisions
- I can follow medicine instructions
- I give informed consent to treatment
- I find my way around health services

[\(NALA—National Adult Literacy Agency\)](#)

Failure to act has consequences throughout society

Communication

Self Management



(NHS image)

ICT Support Systems



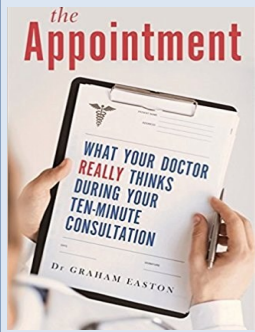
[\(AHRQ – US\)](#)



[\(Health Navigator – NZ\)](#)

Self-help books

Books to improve Health Literacy

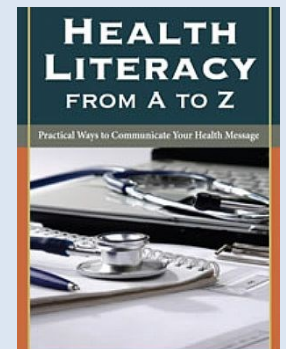


[The appointment: what your doctor really thinks during your ten minute consultation](#)

Easton, G (2016) London: Robinson

[Health Literacy From A To Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message, 2nd edn](#)

Osborne, H (2011) Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett

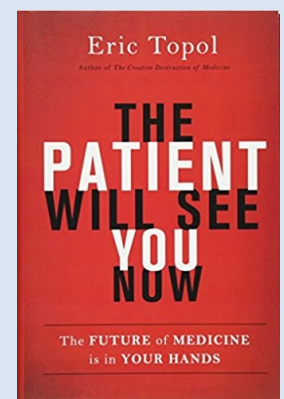


[Your visit to the doctor—the consultation](#)

Available at: <http://www.irelandwoodsurgery.nhs.uk/information/598-2/your-visit-to-the-doctor-the-consultation/>

[The Patient Will See You Now: The Future of Medicine is in Your Hands](#)

Topol, E (2015) Chicago: Basic Books

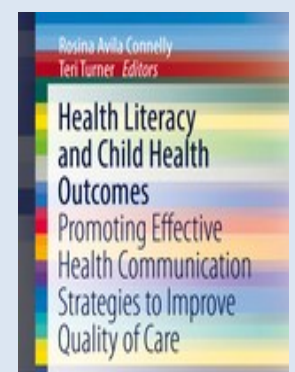


[Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion](#)

Nielsen-Bohlman, L (2004) Washington: National Academies Press

[Health Literacy and Child Health Outcomes Promoting Effective Health Communication Strategies to Improve Quality of Care](#)

Connelly, R (2017) Cham: Springer



What's going on?

Latest campaigns



[#KnowAboutMe](#)



[Well now!' guide](#)



[Green Ribbon Campaign](#)

In the News

A snapshot of international commentary on Health Literacy.



2017/05/01: [“Improving health literacy: it’s everyone’s business”](#) New Zealand Medical Association

2017/03/03: [“Health illiteracy is costly and can be deadly”](#) CNN

2017/03/01: [“Informed patient? Don’t bet on it”](#) New York Times

2017/02/28: [“How to get patients to take more control of their medical decisions”](#) Wall Street Journal

2017/02/17: [“Parents poor comprehension tied to more relapses in children with chronic illness”](#) CBC News

2017/01/17: [“Low level literacy levels puts lives at risk”](#) Irish Times

2016/11/04: [“Two thirds of older people have low literacy, numeracy skills”](#) Irish Times

2016/11/01: [“Hiding in plain sight: the adult literacy crisis”](#) Washington Post

2016/10/12: [“Five ways reading can improve your health & wellbeing”](#) Medical News Today

2016/09/19: [“Helping patients understand their health issues better”](#) Pharmaceutical Journal

2016/09/01: [“Inequality and health literacy”](#) Sydney Morning Herald

2016/09/01: [“Value-based payments urged by IPHA”](#) Irish Medical Times

2016/08/04: [“The incredible costs of low health literacy”](#) Forbes

Useful Websites



[NALA](#)

[Help my Kid Learn](#)

[OLCHC Information
Leaflets](#)

[Australian Commission
for Safety & Quality in
Healthcare](#)

[HEAL \(Health Education &
Libraries\)](#)

[Easy Health](#)

[Madigan Library Lib Guide
\(Health Literacy\)](#)

[Health Literacy \(UK\)](#)

[Health Literacy Place
\(NHS\)](#)

Interesting articles

A collection of recent articles on HI topics
from high impact factor journals



27/04/17: [The Health Literacy Questionnaire \(HLQ\) at the patient-clinician interface: a qualitative study of what patients and clinicians mean by their HLQ scores.](#)

Hawkins, M, (2017)BMC Health Services, 17, 309

17/04/2017: [Assessing eHealth skills across Europeans.](#)

Vicente, M, (2017).Health Policy and Technology epub ahead of print, 1-10.

01/04/2017: [Validation of the Rapid Estimate for Adolescent Literacy in Medicine Short Form \(REALM-TeenS\).](#)

Manganello, J, (2017). Pediatrics, 139/5, 4178-89

03/03/17: [What role does health literacy play in patients' involvement in medical decision-making?](#)

Brabers, A, (2017). PLOS One, 12/3, 1-12.

04/03/16: [Effect of Health Literacy on Quality of Life amongst Patients with Ischaemic Heart Disease in Australian General Practice.](#)

Gonzalez-Chica, D, (2016). PLOS One, 11/3, 1-15.

01/03/16: [Health literacy: applying current concepts to improve health services and reduce health inequalities.](#)

Batterham, R, (2016.) Public Health, 132, 3-12

01/06/15: [Health literacy and 30-day hospital readmission after acute myocardial infarction.](#)

Cooper Bailey, S, (2015)BMJ Open, 5/6, 1-11

Please contact your hospital or healthcare librarian if you have any difficulty accessing the full text for articles included in this issue.

"Healthcare Librarians—making evidence evident"

Social Media

Who's talking and tweeting online



Follow on Twitter

[@nalairland](#)—Registered charity providing leadership on the topic of literacy in Ireland

[@healthlitplace](#)—Group responsible for delivering Scotland's health literacy plan

[@bob_gann](#)—Influential digital inclusion specialist in the NHS

[@healthlitmedia](#)—US research group specialising in health literacy

[@uams_chl](#)—US Health literacy group



YouTube and other videos

Ted Talks: ["Are you confused about health information? You're not alone"](#)

NHS: [Health literacy in Scotland: making it easy](#)

American Medical Association: [Health literacy and patient safety: help patients understand](#)

Helen Osborn: ["Communicating your health message using plain language: metaphors stories visuals"](#)

Digital Gov: ["Using plain language to communicate health information"](#)



Image by NPR [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Blogs etc

Tessa Richards: <http://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/category/tessa-richards/>

Communicate Health: [Health literacy](#)

Children's Health Blog: [Children's Health Project](#)

We hope you find this issue useful but please note, the information in HEAR is not advice and should not be treated as such.

We would be happy to receive any comments or feedback on the content in HEAR, including opinions expressed in the videos and other opinion pieces. Feedback will be used to improve the newsletter so please [email us](#).

We are: Anne Madden, St. Vincent's University Hospital; Bernadette Colley, Temple Street University Hospital; Caroline Rowan, St. Michael's Hospital; Catherine Dillon, HSE; Gethin White, Dr. Steeven's Hospital; Grace Hillis, Daughters of Charity Disability Support Services; Isabelle Delaunoy, University Hospital Limerick; Joanne Callinan, Milford Care Centre; Louise Galligan, Irish Cancer Society; Margaret Morgan, Midland Regional Hospital Mullingar; Marie Carrigan, St. Luke's Radiation Oncology Network; Niamh O'Sullivan, Irish Blood Transfusion Service.

Also available from HEAR

Below you will find links to all back issues

2017

[HEAR 3\(2\)](#) Stroke

[HEAR 3\(1\)](#) Obesity

2016

[HEAR 2 \(6\)](#) Dyslexia

[HEAR 2 \(5\)](#) Diabetes

[HEAR 2\(4\)](#) Focus on Medical Resources

[HEAR 2\(3\)](#) Skin Cancer

[HEAR 2\(2\)](#) Palliative Care

[HEAR 2\(1\)](#) Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

2015

[HEAR 1\(6\)](#) Prostate Cancer

[HEAR 1\(5\)](#) Breast Cancer

[HEAR 1\(4\)](#) Heart Health

[HEAR 1\(3\)](#) Mental Health

[HEAR 1\(2\)](#) Bowel Cancer

[HEAR 1\(1\)](#) Ovarian Cancer



COMING

SOON!

Thank you for reading HEAR. We hope that you will enjoy our next issue on Delirium.