

Nurse Practitioners' Knowledge, Experience and Intention to Use Health Literacy Strategies in Practice

Madeline R. Cafiero, EdD, RN, FNP-BC

Background

❖ 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” (Institute of Medicine (2004, p. 4).

❖ Low health literacy is found in at least 90 million Americans and is related to poor health outcomes across populations (Berkman et al, 2011a). The impact of low health literacy is significant in patient-provider encounters with effects on the entire health care delivery system.

Research Questions

- What do nurse practitioners (NPs) know about health literacy (HL) and related strategies for clinical practice?
- What health literacy strategies are currently used by NPs in clinical practice?
- What is the intention of NPs to use health literacy strategies in future clinical practice?

Methods

- ❖ Design: Descriptive correlational study
- ❖ Theoretical framework : The Theory of Planned Behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, 2010)
- ❖ Sample: Nurse practitioners (NPs) who work in an outpatient setting were recruited from the attendees at a national NP conference (n = 456) in 2011
- ❖ Variables and instruments:
 - Knowledge** measured with Health Literacy Knowledge and Experience Survey (HLKES), Part I (Cormier, 2006)
 - Experience** measured with Health Literacy Knowledge and Experience Survey (HLKES), Part II, Experience Scale (Cormier, 2006)
 - Intention** measured with Health Literacy Strategies Behavioral Intention (HLSBI) Questionnaire (Cafiero, 2012)

Participant demographic data and the relationships between health literacy knowledge, experience, intention, and certain demographic factors were also investigated.

Results

❖ Demographics:

456 nurse practitioners (NPs) **73% return rate**
Predominately female, age 35 and 64 years
Master's prepared

	Sample	National
Doctoral Preparation	7.0%	3.9%
Certification	99.0%	83.8%
Primary Care Practice	70%	36%

National data from US Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (2010)

❖ Knowledge:

Mean item score 19.94/29 or total of 69/100
Overall low level HL knowledge
Gaps noted in regard to:
HL effect on healthcare status
Screening tools for low health literacy
Evaluation measures of educational materials

❖ Experience:

75% of participants reported “never” or only “sometimes” having HL emphasized in NP curriculum
Culturally appropriate written materials most frequently used for patient education
66% of NPs reported “never” or “sometimes” evaluating reading level of written material

❖ Intention:

Mean score for each item 5.44 out of 7
Likert scale- the higher the score, the greater the likelihood participants intend to use health literacy strategies
Overall moderately strong intention to use health literacy strategies in practice
Statistically significant correlation between intention and experience ($p = .01$) and intention and knowledge ($p = .05$).

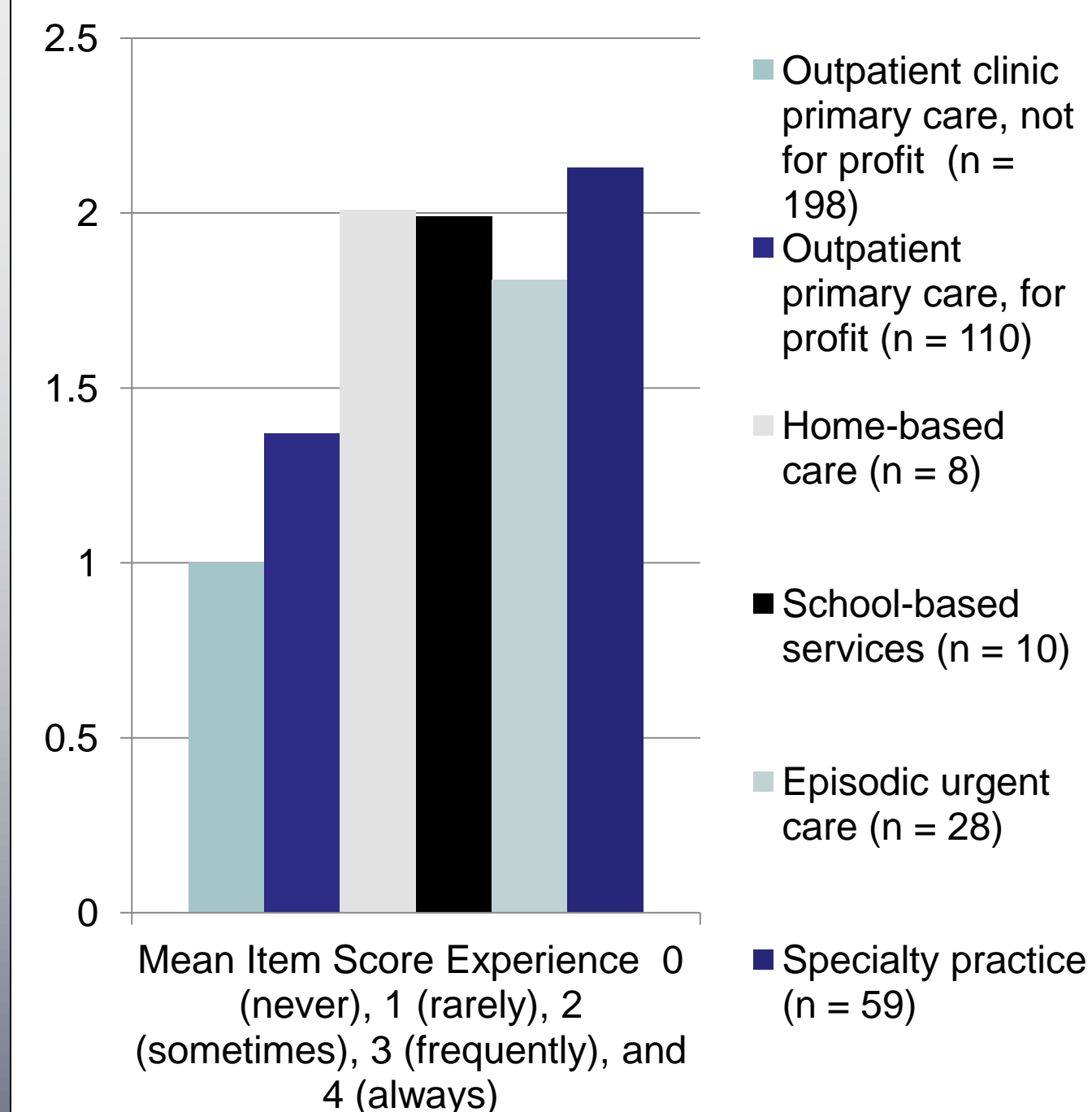
Results

❖ Significant relationship between experience and educational preparation

Mean difference between post-master's certificate preparation and doctorate preparation was found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.039$)

❖ Significant relationship between experience and practice setting

Mean difference between episodic urgent care settings and specialty practice was found to be statistically significant ($p = .008$)



Limitations

- ❖ Convenience sample recruited at an educational conference
- ❖ Missing data re health literacy in the nurse practitioner curriculum (HLKES, Part II, Experience Scale)

Implications

❖ Knowledge:

Increase NPs' knowledge of health literacy (HL) by including health literacy in both pre-licensure curriculum and post licensure continuing education

❖ Experience:

Teach NPs how to evaluate education materials
Standardize written materials available
Develop HL appropriate patient education materials in other formats for NP use in practice

❖ Intention:

Support the strong intention of NPs to use health literacy strategies by providing resources, support, opportunities to practice

Future Research

❖ Knowledge:

How best to provide NPs with educational opportunities related to health literacy and health literacy strategies

❖ Experience:

The relationship between practice settings and use of health literacy strategies

❖ Intention:

How best to support intention to use HL strategies
Further testing of HLSBI instrument

References

- Berkman, N. D., Sheridan, S. L., Donahue, K. E., Halpern, D. J., & Crotty, K. (2011a, July 19). Low health literacy and health outcomes: An updated systematic review. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 155, 97-104.
 - Cormier, C. M. (2006). *Health literacy: The knowledge and experiences of senior baccalaureate nursing students* (Doctoral dissertation).
 - Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitude, intention, and behavior: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
 - Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (2010). *Predicting and changing behavior: The reasoned action approach*. New York: Psychology Press.
 - United States Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration. (2010). *The registered nurse population: Findings from the 2008 National Sample Survey of Registered Nurses*. Retrieved from <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/healthworkforce/rnsurvey>.
- The author would like thank Sigma Theta Tau Delta Pi Chapter for partial financial support of this study**