Policies and Programs Promoting Health Literacy Globally

IOM Roundtable on Health Literacy

Scott C. Ratzan, MD, MPA
Vice President, Global Health, Johnson & Johnson

September 24, 2012
“Informed opinion and active cooperation on the part of the public are of the utmost importance in the improvement of health of the people.”

World Health Organization
Preamble to the Constitution
The Potential of Health Literacy?
What is Health Literacy?

The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.

Sources: Ratzan and Parker, NLM Complete Bibliographies of Medicine, 2000; USDHHS, Healthy People 2010/ Institute of Medicine, 2006/ Affordable Care Act, 2010.
Health Literacy Framework

Skills/ability

Health Literacy

Demands/Complexity

United Nations Ministerial Declaration:

“We stress that health literacy is an important factor in ensuring significant health outcomes and in this regard, call for the development of appropriate action plans to promote health literacy”

July 9, 2009

Political declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Non-communicable Diseases

Develop, strengthen and implement as appropriate, multisectoral public policies and action plans to promote health education and health literacy, including through evidence-based education and information strategies and programmes in and out of schools, and through public awareness campaigns.

September 16, 2011

European Union Declaration

“Stresses the need to enhance health literacy as a policy at EU and Member State levels. Recommends that future EU policy on information to patients on diseases and treatments should move towards new approaches in a coordinated manner, build on a dialogue with stakeholders, promoting health literacy and health information in the broadest sense.”


The European Health Literacy Survey measures health literacy in various member states
Health Literacy is a U.S. Priority

National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy:

1) All people have the right to health information that helps them make informed decisions

2) Health services should be delivered in ways that are understandable and lead to health longevity and good quality of health

"Health literacy is needed to make health reform a reality. Without health information that makes sense to them, people can’t access cost effective, safe, and high quality health services."

Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary Department of Health & Human Services, May 27, 2010

Source:
Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act H.R. 3590 (Public Law 111-148, effective March 23, 2010) Also in Ratzan and Parker, NLM Current Bibliographies of Medicine, 2000; USDHHS, Healthy People 2010 and 2020; Institute of Medicine, 2006
What do we need to support these health literacy policies and proclamations?

Health information that is

• Easily accessible
• Easily understandable
• Actionable

How can we advance health literacy?

Programmes approach with global, international and national momentum that leads to effective, scalable solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government programs &amp; support</th>
<th>Public health advances and capacity building</th>
<th>Private sector programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National Action Plan to Improve Health Literacy (U.S.)</td>
<td>• Health Literacy coalitions and PPPs</td>
<td>• Health checklists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ministerial declarations (United Nations)</td>
<td>• Health communication and literacy integrated in health professional training</td>
<td>• Digital health scorecards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• European Union Resolution and Member state actions</td>
<td>• Evolving competencies for 21st century medical training</td>
<td>• Mobile health communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Linkage with NCD and other health agendas</td>
<td>• Workplace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Media, campaigns and other innovation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Checklists & Scorecards
Checklists in the News and Media

The New York Times
Sunday, September 2, 2012

Our Longing for Lists

Technology has encouraged this form of packaging.

We endlessly count the ways.

THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER
The Checklist Manifesto
How to Get Things Right

ATUL GAWANDE
Bestselling Author of Better and Complications
New frugal technologies do not have to be sophisticated gadgets, but can be as simple as a checklist. A 29-item Safe Childbirth Checklist has been developed and successfully piloted in India, with a draft version available by the end of 2012.
# Examples of checklists in health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Current Stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Line ICU Checklist</strong></td>
<td>Simple five-point checklist to ensure safe insertion of central-venous catheters; proven to significantly reduce central line infections</td>
<td>Global rollout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO Surgical Safety Checklist (2007-)</strong></td>
<td>Universally applicable tool to systematically ensure that all conditions are optimum for patient safety during surgery; proven to reduce severe morbidity and mortality</td>
<td>Global rollout; in use in &gt;4000 hospitals and national policy in several countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHO Safe Childbirth Checklist Program (2008-)</strong></td>
<td>Checklist-based program for reducing childbirth-related mortality in institutional births in lower income settings; shown to significantly improve adherence to essential clinical practices</td>
<td>Development and pilot testing successfully completed; currently in large-scale rollout and evaluation phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mCheck ‘7-day’ Tool (2010-)</strong></td>
<td>WHO Patient Safety Programme project aimed at empowering women with a simple checklist complemented by a mobile phone component</td>
<td>Development completed; currently in evaluation phase (Karnataka State, India)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Checklist potential with Health Literacy

- A low-cost innovation with an increasingly large evidence base to address management of complex or neglected tasks
- Effective checklist programs bundle vital elements of existing guidelines into a simple, user-friendly format comprised of actionable items
- Prior health-related checklist programs have been shown to reduce complications and save lives – surgery, childbirth and other fields
Opportunities for Progress

- Multiple stakeholders continue to advance health literacy at national, state and local levels
- There are unparalleled scaling opportunities with online and mobile communication technologies and reach that provide new promise and opportunities for advancing health literacy
- Future considerations may include checklist tools that are designed for simple and easy use by patients and consumers in multiple settings of varying economic profile and health literacy in order to provide easily accessible, understandable, and actionable health information.
- Checklists and scorecards are becoming widely acceptable tools that can advance health literacy and make improvements in other areas such as NCDs

May 2011

Parsimony for Non-Communicable Disease Prevention: A Checklist

Scott C. Ratzan

Chronic disease—aka non-communicable disease (NCD)—namely, obesity, cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, and asthma, continues to threaten the global economy and opportunities for development over the next decade.

Globally, 60% of all deaths are due to chronic diseases, with about 75% of such deaths occurring in middle- and low-income counties. The global expense to society
From idea to innovation to practice

Sifting the evidence for sound studies with a take home message is laborious and the yield disappointing
The Roots of the Health Scorecard

Just Six Numbers, by Martin Rees

- Exploration of the idea that six factors were necessary to shape the universe, and if one of these numbers were not in place, we would not have the universe

2000 NLM/MLA Leiter Lecture
- Quality Communication: The Path to Ideal Health

“Perhaps we could develop a simple digitized health record for the 21st Century, comprised of six or more factors necessary for health”:

- Blood pressure/heart rate
- Body mass index
- Cholesterol levels
- Immunizations
- Last or appropriate preventive measures (e.g., smoking cessation, sigmoidoscopy, mammograms, etc.)
- Self-reported health status

“Reporting of numbers and health status could generate dialogue and health-seeking behavior and be integrated with technology”

The idea to develop a scorecard tool was also articulated in the background paper for the Institute of Medicine Workshop (September 2009)

- Initial scorecard concept presented at NLM/NIH Leiter Lecture “Quality Communication: The Path to Ideal Health, 2001
- Further presentations at IOM, Council of Foreign Relations, Oxford Health Alliance; consultations with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, WMA, WHPA etc.
Can we develop health literate scorecards?

Institute of Medicine Workshop (September 2009)

Publications on Scorecards (July 2010, Sept 2011)

WHPA Health Improvement Card (September 2011)
A Scorecard Evolution

1. Initial plan, based on considerable public health research, aligning major NCDs with dependent risk factors and health literacy.

2. Color coded and biometric based "Health Improvement Card" which could be used in physician consultations.

3. Early paper version of current score card, which also used warning sign color coding and was progression based.

Health Improvement Card, World Health Professionals Alliance
Digital Health Scorecard

Recent Developments

- Like a credit score for your health; a single number provides an easy means for people to keep track of their health
- Educates people on simple goal ranges enabling them to see how they rate and how they can improve
- Provides a range of medical/health indicators and behaviors and helps people create a mental model of how lifestyle choices and NCDs are connected
- Motivates action by accurately portraying ‘risk’ and ‘preventability’
- Provides ability to track ratings over time to show trends and incentivize improvement

Digital Health Scorecard

The Potential of an Online and Mobile Health Scorecard for Preventing Chronic Disease

TALYA MIKON-SHAZ

Digital Health Scorecard

Digital Health Scorecard

Digital Health Scorecard
Other Examples of mHealth communication programs

*use of mobile devices to provide information that helps people make appropriate health decisions*

**Text4baby** U.S.-based text message service with accurate, text-length health information and resources in a timely, personal format on a familiar channel.

**MAMA (Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action)** the largest public-private health program for women, working with local organizations to send timely and culturally sensitive health and wellness information through mobile channels.
Our Hope for the Future: Health Literacy Tools

• Checklists and scorecards can have major global impacts for patients and consumers – including reduction of:
  – Chronic, non-communicable diseases (NCDs)
  – Maternal and child mortality
  – Infectious diseases

• Better access/use of information through new technologies:
  – Contributes to expanded health literacy globally
  – Helps relieve burden on strained health systems/workforces

• New Promise: Mobile health communication (m-health)

Sources:
United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 2010 ‘Healthy Literacy and the Millennium Development Goals: United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Regional Meeting Background Paper (Abstracted)’, Journal of Health Communication, 15: 1; 211-223