

Exploring the interface of culture, social factors, health literacy and health promotion among older Chinese, Vietnamese, and Asian Indian immigrants with limited English proficiency

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Abstract

Low health literacy is a public health concern and ethnic minority older adults with limited English proficiency face particularly serious literacy challenges. These at-risk populations however, have largely been neglected in prior research and the cultural and social context of health literacy and its relationship to health promotion is understudied. Additionally, current measures of health literacy do not address cultural factors and their applicability to diverse populations has not yet been tested. Using focus groups and cognitive interviews, this study proposes to explore the nature of health literacy and its relation to health promotion in the context of social and cultural factors among three groups of older Asian immigrants: Chinese, Vietnamese and Asian Indian. The study will attempt to: a) develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between social and cultural factors, health literacy, and health promotion behaviors; and b) construct a more culturally appropriate measure of health literacy for Asian older adult populations. The study will provide much needed information for identifying intervention points to improve health literacy among at-risk groups and promote appropriate health promotion and health maintenance behaviors. This collaborative research between nursing and social work will enhance the evidence base for integrated practice between health care and social service professionals.