Health Literacy among Students of Medical Sciences, Master's level, Tirana, Albania.

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Abstract

Background: Health literacy is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as cognitive and social skills that determine the motivation and ability of individuals to access, understand and use information in ways that promote and maintain good health. good. Health literacy among female students is important so that medical professionals can provide quality health care and improve education during verbal or non-verbal communication with the patient.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the levels of health education (HL) of the students, Master's level, of FSHMT, Tirana, Albania.

Methods: A cross-sectional study, where 180 students of FSHMT participate in different study programs (Nursing, Physiotherapy, Midwifery, Speech Therapy, Imaging) was conducted during January-February 2024, at FSHMT. An anonymous standardized questionnaire of the International European Health Literature Survey (*HLS-EU-Q16*) was distributed and used to collect information on general HL among FSHMT students. Part of the Questionnaire was basic sociodemographic information, which was also anonymous. Binary logistic regression was used to evaluate factors related to HL as sufficient, inadequate, problematic or limited, excellent.

Results: The study population was 40.3% male and 60.7% female. The average total score of the health literacy index was 38.3% among master level students {on a scale from 0 (minimum HL) to 50 (maximum HL), ($p < 0.001$)}. Of the total sample, 40.5% were classified as adequate in health literacy, while 13.6% had inadequate/inadequate HL, followed by problematic or limited HL 27.8%, and only 18.1% of them had excellent HL where the *study program* was an indicator factor that significantly increased the prevalence of excellent HL in these statistics (mainly the Nursing program, followed by Speech Therapy, compared to other degrees).

A significant finding of this study was the *gender factor*, in this case the male gender, which significantly increased the prevalence of HL, mainly limited to 54.6% to 45.4%. Another finding was *low socio-economic status,* which also increased the likelihood of limited HL.

Conclusion: Based on the above-mentioned results, the prevalence of limited HL was "relatively high" among students of Medical Sciences, master's level. There is a need for interventions aimed at increasing the general HL of FSHMT students, such as the improvement of Curricula

(Faculty/University initiatives) but also Media Literacy through cooperation with Visual Media Institutions or electronic platforms for education or promotion health.

Keywords: *Health literacy, HLS-EU-Q16 questionnaire, students/education,.educational promotion, media literacy.*