Health Literacy,
Medication Management and the Elderly

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Objectives

1. Describe the relationship between health literacy and medication adherence in the elderly

2. Describe and discuss effective methods of providing medication counseling and education for elderly patients that address health literacy

3. Discuss interventions to improve health literacy and medication management or the elderly
Health Literacy
Health Literacy

- Below Basic: 12%
- Basic: 14%
- Intermediate: 22%
- Proficient: 53%

National Center for Education Statistics, 2006
Tip of the Iceberg
Clients Bring…

- FAMILY BELIEFS AND HISTORY
- COMMUNITY VALUES
- POLITICAL SITUATION
- LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
- ECONOMIC SITUATION
- HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
- INSURANCE STATUS
- RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY
Medication Management and the Elderly

- 3 chronic conditions
- 5 medications
- Numerous providers
- Hospitalizations
- System Communication
- Provider-Pt. interaction
- Family Members

1. http://www.uspharmacist.com/content/d/senior_care/c/11540/
Labeling

- AMOXICILLIN 500MG
  - Take: One capsule three times daily
Don't take food
Chew pill and crush before swallowing
Chew it up so it will dissolve. Don't swallow whole or you might choke

Don't leave medicine in the sun
Don't drink and drive
Don't drink alcohol. It's poison, and it'll kill you
If allergic to dairy, don't take medicine
Don't eat for 1 hour after taking medicine
Don't take when wet
Don't need water

Use extreme caution in how you take it
Medicine will make you feel dizzy
Take only if you need it

Davis et al 2006. Adapted from Table 3.
Labeling and Information Problems

- Minimal standards exist
- Not patient friendly
- Inserts are too complex and have too much information
Universal Precautions Approach

[Image of a Universal Precautions Compliance Kit]

Medication Counseling

- Use plain language
- Repeat key messages
- Effectively solicit questions
- Use patient friendly materials
- Teach Back or Show Me

https://open.umich.edu/education/dent/patient-comm-skills
Working with Seniors

- Acoustics
- Avoid Distractions
- Face to Face
- Eye Contact
- Speak Slowly
- Simple Words
- Pictures
- Limit Topics
- Charts and Pictures
- Summarize

www.clinicians.org
Plain language

- At 8 in the morning and 10 at night
- On the skin ("topical")
- For your sugar
- You may feel…
- Goes into your butt…. 
- An empty stomach is…. 
- Number of syllables
Questions

• What is what?
• Why is each one used?
• When should they be taken?
• What does the label say?
• Where are all the medicines I take?
• What happens if I don’t take this pill?
• Where do I get my meds?
Consumer Friendly Materials

- Simple font (12 pt)
- Layout
- Writing level
- Appearance
- Cultural context
- Limit message to one or two key points
- Supplement with visuals
- Plain Language

[Image of consumer friendly material]

Starting Insulin – a patient guide

USING INSULIN TO TREAT YOUR DIABETES: What it means for you

Insulin helps your body get energy from the food you eat. If you do not have enough insulin, or the insulin you have is not working right, you have diabetes and need to take medicine.

- People with type 1 diabetes do not make any insulin and MUST inject insulin.
- People with type 2 diabetes do not make enough insulin or need help using the insulin they have. They need to use pills, insulin shots or both.

The only way to get insulin into your body is with a shot. Many people with diabetes use insulin shots. There are many kinds of insulin, some work fast, others do not.

[Website link]
http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/diabetes/patient.shtm
Antes de tomar insulina, es importante conocer los diferentes tipos de insulina y su efecto en el cuerpo. Algunos de los tipos de insulina son:

- **Bolo**: Normalmente se toma antes de las comidas principales para controlar el nivel de glucosa en la sangre.
- **Basal**: Se administra regularmente durante el día para mantener un nivel constante de insulina en el cuerpo.

Es importante saber cuándo se debe tomar cada tipo de insulina para mantener un nivel adecuado de glucosa en la sangre. Algunas veces, el nivel de glucosa puede ser demasiado alto o demasiado bajo, lo cual puede afectar la salud.

Si tienes dudas sobre la administración de insulina, es importante consultar a un profesional médico. Ellos pueden ayudarte a entender mejor la diabetes y cómo administrar correctamente la insulina.
La insulina, junto con la glucosa, entra a la célula y es metabolizada para producir energía.

1. La insulina se une a su receptor.
2. La glucosa ingresa a la célula.

A causa de...
Eating Right with Diabetes

Eat lots of **vegetables**. They are naturally low in fat and in calories and full of vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Vegetables include: spinach, broccoli, cabbage, bok choy, brussels sprouts, kale, carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce.

Eat **proteins** that have a small amount of fat, including lean meats, seafood, low-fat dairy, or legumes (soy products, peanut butter, beans).

Avoid food high in fat. High-fat foods include: butter, cream, whole milk, cooking oil, coconut oil, and lard. If you have diabetes, any extra weight can put you at risk for heart disease, so limiting fats—including chicken skin, red meat, and full-fat dairy foods—is important. Even olive oil, a healthy fat, has lots of calories, so use just a little bit.

Do not eat too many sweets. Sweets include natural sweets, such as sugar or molasses, not just candy, cake, or cupcakes. When cooking sweets, use less sugar or a sugar substitute.

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**Eating the Right Amount**

The amount of food you eat will affect the level of sugar in your blood. Eat small amounts of food. If you are checking the sugar in your blood, make sure you write these readings down.

One easy way to eat less is to divide your plate into three parts. Half of the plate should contain vegetables. One-quarter of the plate should contain meat or protein, such as eggs, peanut butter, fish, chicken, or tofu. One quarter should contain a carbohydrate or starch, such as corn, potato, rice, or whole grain bread.

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**Eating at the Right Time**

The timing of your meals can affect the level of sugar in your blood. If you wait too long to eat, your sugar level can become too low. If you eat meals too close together, or snack throughout the day, your sugar level can be too high.

It is important to eat after taking your medicine or insulin to make sure your sugar level does not fall too low. **Do not skip meals.**
Visual Reinforcements

http://fitfoodsforthought.wordpress.com/

Teach Back

- What size is a portion?
- Show me which pills you will take when?
- How do you draw up insulin?
- Where will you give it?
Medication Management

- Pill boxes
- Electronic reminders
- Photos of medications
- Tape pill(s) to medical sheet (may pose safety risk)
- The Sharpie technique
- Stickers
- Text Messaging
- Glow Caps
- Phone calls
Pill Bottles
## Medication Record Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Medication</th>
<th>Purpose or Reason Taken</th>
<th>Dose</th>
<th>Time(s) of Day</th>
<th>Form, Color, and Shape</th>
<th>Special Instruction/Side Effects</th>
<th>Other</th>
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VISIT SUMMARY

Key points we discussed today:
- Your blood pressure is 150/90.
- Your goal is less than 130/85.
- Diet and exercise are key to controlling your hypertension.

New medications:
- benazepril (Lotensin) 10 mg - one tablet per day

Instructions:
- Take your new pill when you first get up in the morning.
- Walk around the block every morning.
- Walk around the block every afternoon.
- Cut back on salt and alcohol.
- Come back for a follow-up visit in 2 weeks.

Call our office if symptoms worsen or if you have any questions.

John Smith, MD  9 / 6 / 06
Physician  Date
Team Approach
The Health System
Welcoming?

Click here for printable PDF version of this map.

2200 E. Washington St. • Bloomington, IL 61701 • 309/662-3311

www.clinicians.org
Simple Signs

Arlington Free Clinic

www.clinicians.org
Policy and Procedures

• **Purpose**: Elmwood Medical Clinic serves a diverse population of patients who have a range of levels of health literacy. Elmwood Medical Clinic is committed to providing culturally-sensitive and language-appropriate care for each patient. High-quality services enhance the quality of clinical care provided by Elmwood Medical Clinic. There are several ways in which health literacy services are addressed at Elmwood Medical Clinic.

• **Guidelines and Procedures**….
Language Access
Staff Training

- Ease of scheduling for Seniors—early in the day
- Greet them
- Seat them in a comfortable area
- Make things easy to read
- Escort them
- Check on them in the room
- Self Assessment
- Role Playing
For More Information

Association of Clinicians for the Underserved (ACU)

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www.facebook.com/CliniciansfortheUnderserved