

Health literacy in blood donors

Pietro Renzi¹, Alberto Franci¹

Summary of Background Data

Blood transfusion and donations are two critical areas in medicine, where health literacy proves indispensable. Understanding the different blood components and their respective indications is essential for patients to grasp the rationale behind the transfusion [1]. Within this context, health literacy plays a critical role in facilitating patients understanding complex procedures, potential risks and treatment options [2].

Inadequate health literacy hampers patients' ability to actively engage in their care, leading to poorer health outcomes.

Objectives

The main aim of this study was to assess the health literacy levels among blood donors and contrast it with the health literacy levels observed in the general community. The study encompassed blood donors aged 18 years and older who were affiliated to the AVIS (Italian Blood Donors Association) of Senigallia. The survey was administered from October to December 2024.

Methods

The instrument HLS-EU-Q-16 was used and administered using CAWI (Computer Aided Web Interview). This methodology was chosen after a deep analysis of the literature [3] regarding main types of data collection. 16 items of the questionnaire used, assessing self-perceived HL, were aggregated in the general HL index, which provides a synthetic measure of HL levels. To achieve a better comparison with other research in this field the index was standardized on a scale from a minimum of 0 (lowest level of HL) to a maximum of 50 (best level of HL).

Results

The percentages of inadequate or problematic literacy were calculated first, together with the HLI means, both globally and according to studied variable categories with 95% confidence intervals (CI 95%). The χ^2 test was performed to analyze the relationship between inadequate or problematic literacy and demographic, socioeconomic and health status variables. Independence t-test and ANOVA were employed to compare the mean scores of HL scale across independent groups. Bivariate and multivariate logistic regression model were adjusted to estimate the adjusted odds ratios (ORs) of association between the dichotomous variable 'Inadequate or problematic literacy/Sufficient literacy' and the rest of the variables.

Discussion/Conclusions

While acknowledging that the study's focus on blood donors within a specific area of Marche Region may limit its generalizability to a broader population, it nonetheless constitutes a significant contribution to the literature by elucidating the relationship between HL and blood donation behaviors. Consistent with the finding of the study, we posed that HL can indeed play a pivotal role in bolstering the ranks of blood donors.

References

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¹ Università degli Studi della Repubblica di San Marino – Università degli Studi di Urbino "Carlo Bo"