Challenge toward Healthy College Life and Health Behaviors: Health Literacy and College Achievement

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BACKGROUND

- **Health literacy**: The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010, Title V, defines health literacy as the degree to which an individual has the capacity to obtain, communicate, process, and understand basic health information and services to make appropriate health decisions.

- **Literacy vs. Health Literacy**: Limited literacy and limited health literacy are NOT the same thing. While strong literacy and numeracy skills may make health information and services easier to navigate, healthcare activities can still be unfamiliar territory to individuals.

  - Focus traditionally on specific disease, health outcomes, health conditions, health disparities, minority populations, or situations.


OBJECTIVES

- **Study Design, Survey, and Participants**: An anonymous survey was conducted via email to approximately one thousand students from an urban university in the northeastern part of the U.S. in 2014-2015.
- **Received responses from 225 college students.**
- **The survey included socio-demographic characteristics, educational achievements, health literacy level, risk behaviors, and their health education expectations.**

METHOD

- **Empirical Model**: College achievement (GPA) = \( \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \text{Health} + \alpha_2 \text{Behavior factors} + \alpha_3 \text{Demographic factors} + \epsilon_i \)
  - Healthy college life (HCL) = \( \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Health literacy} + \beta_2 \text{Behavior factors} + \beta_3 \text{Demographic factors} + \omega_i \)

- **Dependent variables**: Subjective happiness [quality of college life]
  - Q: Are you happy with your life in general? Please rate from 1 (least satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied).
  - Subjective satisfaction with college life
  - Q: Are you satisfied with your college life in general? Please rate from 1 (least satisfied) to 10 (most satisfied).
  - Subjective view of future after graduation
  - Q: How optimistic are you about your future after graduation? Please rate from 1 (not optimistic) to 10 (very optimistic).

- **Independent variables**: Health literacy is a compounding/confounding variable:
  - Health information acquisition at a doctor’s office,
  - Understanding prescription labels
  - Health insurance knowledge
  - Use of health information technology
  - Seeking health information through media
  - Knowledge of epidemiology,
  - Knowledge of nutrition
  - Health behavior: scale 9 ~36

RESULTS

- **Healthy College Life of College Students**
  - Health
  - Health Literacy
  - Happiness in college life
  - Satisfaction with college life
  - Optimistic about own future after graduation

- **College Achievements**
  - GPA
  - Happiness in college life
  - Satisfaction with college life

- **Effect of Healthy College Life by College Students on College Life**
  - Health
  - Happiness in college life
  - Satisfaction with college life
  - 0.38% increase in happiness in college life
  - 0.30% increase in satisfaction with college life
  - 0.28% increase in optimistic about own future after graduation

- **Effect of Healthy College Life**
  - Health
  - Happiness in college life
  - Satisfaction with college life
  - 0.24% increase in GPA
  - 0.25% increase in GPA
  - 0.20% increase in GPA

- **Effect of Health Literacy by college students**
  - Health
  - Happiness in college life
  - Satisfaction with college life
  - 0.24% increase in happiness in college life
  - 0.26% increase in satisfaction with college life
  - 0.21% increase in optimistic about own future after graduation

CONCLUSIONS/IMPLICATIONS

- There is a positive relationship between health healthy college life.
- Improvement in health raise quality of healthy college life. The elasticity ranges from 0.28%~0.38%.
- Students with good health status, happiness in college life, or satisfaction with college life have better GPA and achievements than students who do not have these characteristics.
- A relative increase in health literacy among college students in urban settings shows clear-cut positive influences on school achievement and maintain good health behaviors.
- Good health literacy is the major factor of raise healthy college life.
- College student’s with good health literacy suggests their good perception of health knowledge and concepts.
- Good health literacy skills are imperative for a successful college education achievements. Adequate literacy skills by college students are attributed to a healthy college life.
- Clearly this notion is what underlies the broad public concern about the need for health literacy education at the freshmen level.