The need of design a tool to measure smoking literacy for Iranian society

Rahman Panahi[1], Ali Ramezankhani[2], Mahmoud Tavousi[3], Shamsaddin Niknami[1]

1. Department of Health Education & Health Promotion, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran
2. Department of Health Services, Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences Tehran, Iran
3. Health Metrics Research Center, Iranian Institute for Health Sciences Research, ACECR, Tehran, Iran
Correspondence to: Shamsaddin Niknami, Department of Health Education & Health Promotion, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran
Email: Niknamis@modares.ac.ir

Dear Chief in Editor

Health literacy measurement tool design has recently engaged by health researchers around the world. In this regard, important steps have been taken especially in the design, testing and implementation of screening tools [1] but there is still no general agreement on the various tools for measuring health literacy. Since the level of literacy depends on the individual characteristics and the number of people in contact with the health system so various tools are required for different age groups, different stages of life and various health topics. The level of health literacy and the information needs of a pregnant woman are quite different with a person who has recently been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes and this should be taken into account in measuring health literacy [2].

Recent studies about health literacy in recent years show that their focus is on designing tools and measuring general health literacy and so far only a few studies have considered the design of tools or the measurement of specific health literacy that focus on issues such as oral health, risk factors for chronic diseases, breast cancer, etc. [1-3].

Regarding smoking literacy definition as the capacity of individuals to understand and use health information related to smoking, researchers accessed only one study and one tool which were also about measuring smoking literacy in patients with asthma [4]. Regarding the prevalence of smoking, the latest national study conducted in Iran showed that 25% of the population aged 18- 65 years old were smokers [5]. Also in the latest study on the relationship between health literacy

and smoking, researchers have emphasized the effectiveness of health literacy on smoking and the need to design a specific tool to measure smoking literacy in all age groups [5].

Review of studies showed that the concept of smoking literacy in the country has not been investigated yet and there is no reliable and valid tool for measuring smoking literacy. As well as considering the effect of health literacy on smoking and increasing the perception of people from messages with anti-smoking

content and considering the potential effect of health literacy on the results of prevention and quit smoking programs [5], it seems necessary to design a smoking literacy tool in the Iran. Regarding the high prevalence of smoking in Iran and its harmful effects on the health of individuals, it seems that improving the level of smoking literacy can be effective to improve the health of people. In this regard, healthcare planners should be aware of smoking literacy levels to perform

health and educational interventions and design and implement training programs based on smoking literacy.

References

1- Ghanbari SH, Ramezankhani A, Montazeri A, Mehrabi Y. Health literacy measure for adolescents (HELMA): Development and psychometric properties. *PLoS ONE* 2016; 11(2): e0149202.

2- Esna Ashari F, Pirdehghan A, Rajabi F, et al. The study of health literacy of staff about risk factors of chronic diseases in 2014. *AJCM* 2015; 22 (3): 248-54.

5- Khalili S, Tavousi M, Moghaddam Banaem L. Health literacy for women with breast cancer (HELBA): development and psychometric properties. *Payesh* 2017; 16(3): 359-66.

4- Heng Ngoh AS, Chen ZJ, Tai BC, et al. Smoking literacy amongst adult Asian asthma patients in primary care. *PSH* 2017; 26(4): 235–40.

5- Panahi R, Ramezankhani A, Tavousi M, Koosehloo A, Niknami S. Relationship of health literacy with knowledge and attitude toward the harms of cigarette smoking among University Students. *JECH* 2017; 3(4): 38-44.