

Department of Research Abstracts

PEDIATRICIANS' PERCEPTIONS OF LIMITED HEALTH LITERACY (HL) AND ITS EFFECT ON PATIENT CARE BASED ON PROPORTION OF PATIENTS WITH PUBLIC INSURANCE Michael E. Speer, Teri Turner, Perri Klass, Mary Ann Abrams, Benard Dreyer, Modena Wilson, William Cull. Department of Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX; New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY; Blank Children's Hospital, Iowa Health System, Des Moines, IA; New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY; American Medical Association, Chicago, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics, Elk Grove Village, IL. **Presented at the 2008 Pediatric Academic Societies Annual Meeting.**

Background: Low HL skills affect ≥ 78 million U.S. adults. These issues may not be disclosed and resulting poor doctor-patient communication can lead to lack of adherence and medical errors. Public insurance (PI), a proxy measure for low income, may influence pediatrician perceptions of HL issues and provider response.

Objective: To assess differences in self-reported HL-related perceptions and practices among pediatricians whose practices are comprised of differing proportions of patients with PI.

Design/Methods: Cross-sectional survey of a 2007 random sample of U.S. AAP members (N=1605, response rate = 56%). Analysis limited to 848 pediatricians providing patient care. Questions assessed perceptions of HL-related issues in their practice. Bivariate analysis assessed differences based on proportion of PI.

Results: The Table shows the major findings.

	$\leq 50\%$ PI	$> 50\%$ PI	p value
Estimated % of children's caregivers (CG) w/ limited literacy in their practice (mean)	7.9	25.1	<0.001
% Pediatricians reporting they:			
have good/excellent ability to identify CG has literacy problem	49.9	58.7	0.025
were ever aware CG did not understand information delivered	78.0	84.3	0.038
ask CG to teach back information always/most of time	19.5	27.8	0.013
demonstrate med administration always/most of time	30.1	42.3	0.001
find CG limited English proficiency is mod/sig barrier	21.9	55.8	<0.001
find CG limited cognitive skills is mod/sig barrier	25.5	58.6	<0.001

In addition, 44% of all pediatricians were aware of a communication-related error in patient care within the past 12 mos (37.5% with $\leq 50\%$ public insurance [PI], 52.2% $> 50\%$ PI); 14.8% of these errors were described as resulting in moderate to great harm to the patient.

Conclusions: Pediatricians serving a larger proportion of patients with PI appear to have greater awareness of HL-related problems and also perceive greater barriers. Despite heightened awareness of HL-related issues, including errors in patient care, physicians underutilize techniques known to enhance communication. Strategies should focus on overcoming identified barriers and utilizing skills such as “teach-back” and “demonstration” to enhance adherence and decrease errors, regardless of practice environment and patient mix.

