Limitations experienced by general practitioners and nurses relating to health literacy and obesity management in primary health care
Outline

1. Background and aims
2. Methods
3. Findings
4. Implications
Very low health literacy affects 20% of the Australian population and is a barrier to the uptake and effectiveness of lifestyle interventions.

ABS 2006.
Proportion of general practice patients with low health literacy by BMI

![Bar chart showing the proportion of general practice patients with low health literacy by BMI. The chart compares baseline and follow-up data across BMI categories: <25, 25-29, and 30+.](chart.png)
GP intentions to refer

Kim et al. BMC Family Practice (2015) 16:45

Analysis of factors influencing general practitioners’ decision to refer obese patients in Australia: a qualitative study
Kyoung Kon Kim¹, Lin-Lee Yeong², Ian D Caterson³ and Mark F Harris²*

• *I want lots of people with a BMI over 30 to go somewhere, but most are not really interested or motivated to change* [Rural GP #1]
• *...they may or may not put changes in place. But again, motivation is probably the biggest issue there.”* [Urban GP #7]
Objective

To identify issues reported by general practitioners (GPs) and practice nurses (PNs) in the assessment and management of their patients with obesity and low health literacy.
Methods

As part of a cluster randomised controlled trial, 37 GPs and 24 PNs from 20 practices in low socioeconomic areas, 10 each in Sydney and Adelaide, completed a validated questionnaire.
5As of preventive care

Ask

Assess:
Risk
Health Literacy
Readiness

Advise & Agree:
Motivational interviewing,
goal setting

Assist:
Individual plan, referral
navigation

Arrange:
Follow up and maintenance
Frequency of actions across the 5As

- Assess
- Advise/Agree
- Assist/Refer

Factors:
- Assess Diet
- Assess PA
- Measure BMI
- Measure WC
- Advise > Fr and Veg
- Advise < Kjoules
- Advise < fat
- Advise > PA
- Set wt loss goal
- Refer diet
- Refer wt management
- Refer PA

%
Confidence in assessment and management of obesity

- Assess diet
- Assess PA
- Assess readiness to lose wt
- Advise on weight mx
- Arrange referral for diet, PA or Wt
- Follow up referred pts

% Confidence

- GP
- PN
Proportion tailoring their approach to health literacy often or >60% of the time

- Assess health literacy
- Tailor advice to HL
- Communication techniques
- Teach-back
- Encourage questions
- Assist access to referral
- Follow up referral

GP
PN
Barriers to management of obesity in general practice

- Lack of time
- Uncertainty about what to provide
- Communication difficulties
- Cultural differences
- Lack of patient interest
- Patient low health literacy

%
Factors influencing patient weight loss behaviour

**Individual factors**
- Chronic conditions
- Motivation

**Health literacy related to weight and diabetes management**

**External factors**
- Cost and availability of food
- Family and social support

**Motivation and beliefs**
- Identifying weight management to be beneficial for future health
- Knowledge about self-control and personal responsibility to manage diet and physical activity
- Negative attitude towards weight loss and being denial about weight loss

**Access and use of health care**
- Seeking advice and support from health care providers to manage the condition
- Navigate the health care system to obtain various services and support regarding diet, physical activity and diabetes
- Negative attitude towards health care services and providers

**Behaviour**
- Self-management of weight by adhering to diet and physical activity
- Choice of food to better manage the weight
- Generating alternatives to the existing bad habits
- Emotional eating affecting their weight
- Rationalisation of the behaviour

**Ensure anonymity.**
Conclusions

Interventions to improve the assessment, advice, goal setting, referral and follow up of patients with obesity in general practice need to encourage and support GPs and PNS to assess their levels of health literacy and use techniques to enhance communication and enhance referral navigation.
COMPaRE-PHC

CENTRE FOR OBESITY MANAGEMENT & PREVENTION RESEARCH EXCELLENCE IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

http://compare-phc.unsw.edu.au/