

Screening to Identify Health Literacy Among Mexican AmericansShirley Wells*The University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas, United States*

Access to care requires more than the presence of the patient or family, it requires them to engage in the process of care. Low understanding of health information can limit full participation in the care process. Health literacy is the ability to read and understand prescriptions and medical advice, and to take appropriate action regarding health information. Within the Mexican American community health literacy may be a particular salient problem but not much is known about the extent of the problem or its impact on their health. Occupational therapy clinicians are often unable to identify patients with limited literacy skills based on information gathered during routine clinical interactions and patients with limited literacy skills are often reluctant to reveal this limitation. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to: a) assess the health literacy among the Mexican American parents of the school district and (b) assess their preferred methods for learning about health issues. For three years, the Mexican American parents who attended a health literacy symposium were administered a five question survey. One-third of the parents had limited or marginal health literacy skills. Their preferred methods for learning about health issues were from talking with family and friends and receiving visual and written materials. If a patient's literacy skills are limited, it would alert the clinician to the need for extra care and special approaches in communicating with the patient and/or family.