

10 About the Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ)

The Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ) identifies the specific health literacy strengths and limitations of people and communities. It examines nine areas of health literacy.

The Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ) is a critical advancement in health literacy measurement. It has been designed to provide practitioners, organisations and governments with data describing the health literacy strengths and limitations of individuals and populations.

These data allow development and selection of fit-for-purpose response strategies that optimise opportunities to improve equity in health outcomes and access.



Key resources:

Osborne RH, Batterham R, Elsworth GR, Hawkins M, Buchbinder R. The grounded theory, psychometric development and initial validation of the Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ). BMC Public Health. 2013;13:658.

Link: <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/658>

hlq Health
Literacy
Questionnaire

Psychometric properties of the HLQ

Modern and rigorous psychometric tests have shown the HLQ is a robust independent measure of each of the nine identified health literacy dimensions. It has excellent psychometric properties, strong construct validity, strong reliability, and is shown to provide unbiased mean estimates of group differences.^{1,2}

Structure and administration of the HLQ

The Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ) consists of 44 questions and can be either self-administered or orally administered. It is available in paper and online formats (at Ophelia.net.au). Completion time varies depending on the skills and approach of the respondent. It usually takes between 7 and 30 minutes to complete. When orally administered by telephone or in person the HLQ takes between 20 and 45 minutes to complete.

Scoring the HLQ

The HLQ provides nine scale scores. Each score provides insight into the strengths and limitations of the respondent, but the scores are most powerful when viewed together to show the 'health literacy profile' of the respondent.

Average scale scores for groups of respondents provide useful insights into the health literacy strengths and limitations of populations. The Ophelia team recommend the use of cluster analysis or latent class analysis to identify groups of individuals that have similar health literacy profiles. This approach to examining HLQ data un.masks sub-groups of people who have particular strengths that can be built upon, or sub-groups with limitations, which services might need to provide support to improve.

Languages available

The HLQ is available in a range of languages. Visit the Ophelia.net.au website for an up-to-date list of available translations. A strict protocol is followed for each translation to help ensure each version of the HLQ is linguistically, culturally and psychometrically robust.

Accessing the HLQ

Visit the Ophelia.net.au website to register and obtain a license to use the HLQ.



The nine scales of the health literacy questionnaire (HLQ)



Reference

1. Osborne RH, Batterham R, Elsworth GR, Hawkins M, Buchbinder R. The grounded theory, psychometric development and initial validation of the Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ). BMC Public Health. 2013;13:658. <http://www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2458/13/658>
2. Osborne RH, Elsworth GR, Batterham R, Hawkins M, Dodson S, Beauchamp A. Psychometric properties of the HLQ: a summary (forthcoming).

Suggested citation

Dodson S, Beauchamp A, Batterham RW and Osborne RH. Information sheet 10: About the Health Literacy Questionnaire (HLQ). In Ophelia Toolkit: A step-by-step guide for identifying and responding to health literacy needs within local communities. 2014. Retrieved from www.ophelia.net.au