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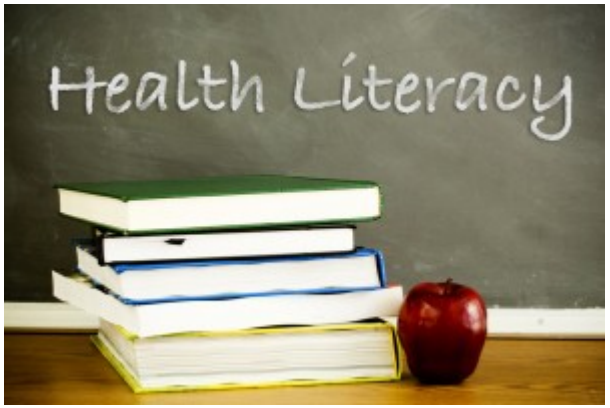
How Health Literacy will be defined in future. ePatients, eHealth services and eHealth Literacy – the forgotten corner stones of contemporary health literacy research.

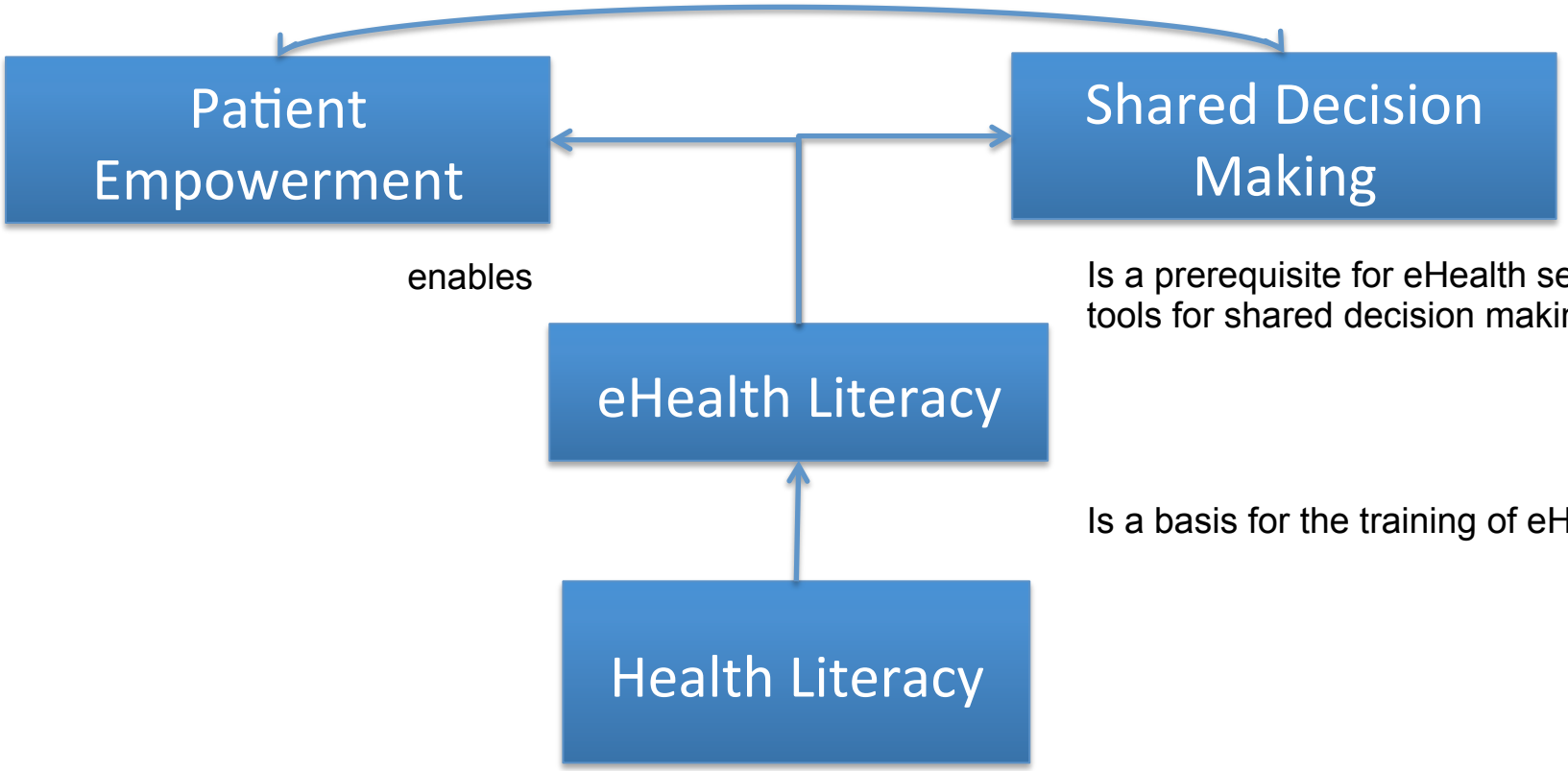


eHEALTH LITERACY – Definition from Norman/Skinner

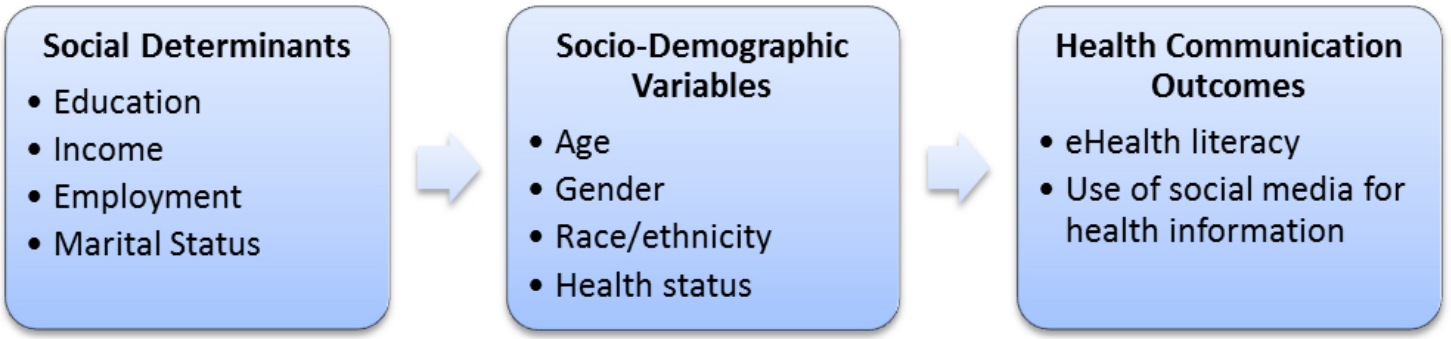
The ability to seek, find, understand, and appraise health information from electronic sources and to apply the gained knowledge to addressing or solving a health problem.

Norman CD, Skinner HA. eHealth Literacy: Essential Skills for Consumer Health in a Networked World.
Journal of medical Internet research. 2006;8(2):e9.

Classification of eHealth Literacy



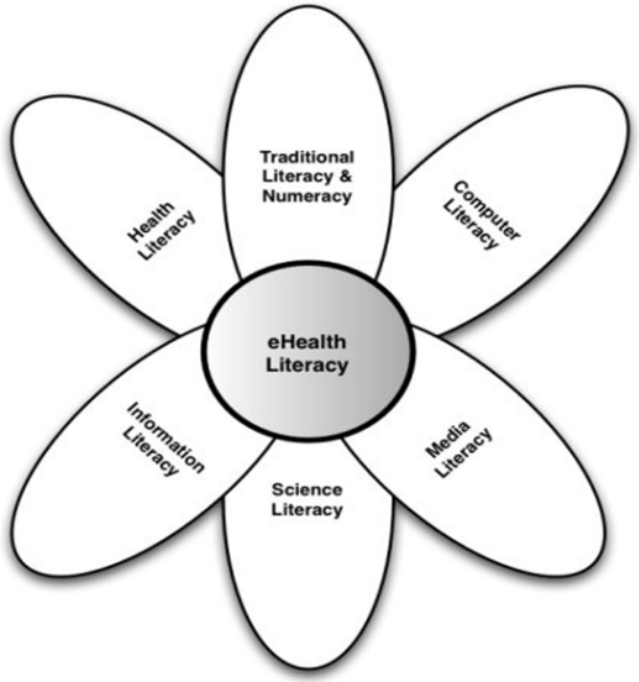
Influences on eHealth literacy



Structural Influence Model of Health Communication

Tennant B, Stellefson M, Dodd V, Chaney B, Chaney D, Paige S, et al. eHealth Literacy and Web 2.0 Health Information Seeking Behaviors Among Baby Boomers and Older Adults. Journal of medical Internet research. 2015;17(3):e70

Lily model from Norman and Skinner

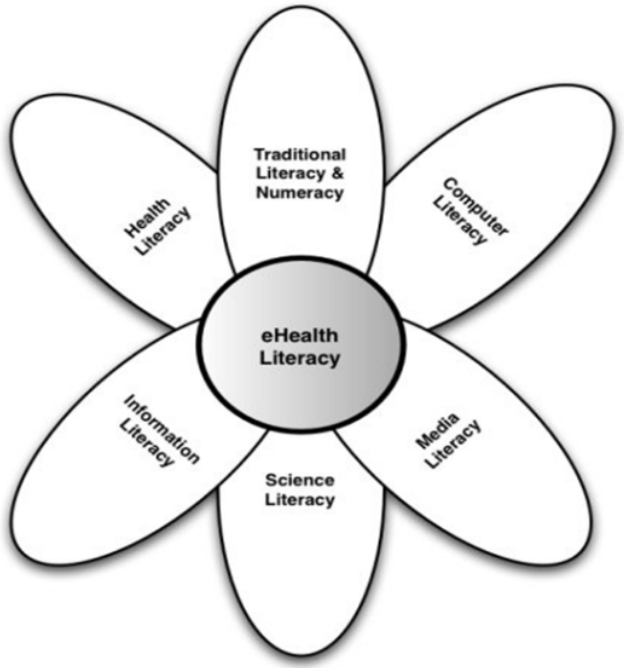


- Health Literacy: understanding of health knowledge
- Computer Literacy: competence to use hard- and software
- Science Literacy: understanding of scientific processes and outcomes
- Traditional Literacy: reading, writing, numerical reasoning
- Media Literacy: ability to examine critically different types of media
- Information Literacy: search and understanding of information in oder to be bale to take decisions

Norman CD, Skinner HA. eHealth Literacy: Essential Skills for Consumer Health in a Networked World.
Journal of medical Internet research. 2006;8(2):e9.

Gilstad, H. Towards a comprehensive model of eHealth Literacy. 2nd European workshop Practical Aspects of Health Informatics, Trondheim 2014.

- Type of health question
- Cultural context
- Social context
- Institutional context
- Type of eHealth technology
- Propositional literacy
- Procedural literacy

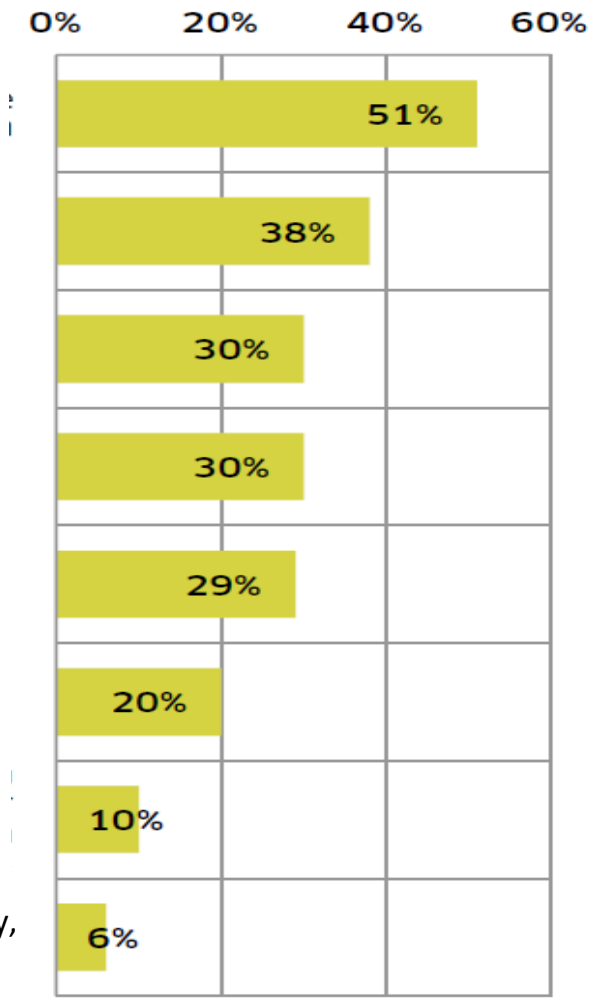


Communicative expertise

National ePatient Survey

- First implementation in 2010; The survey is anonymous and optional. For two months the survey was online on 33 of the most popular health portals such as insurance portals, patient portals or special health portals in Germany and Switzerland.
- Patients, chronically ill persons and people surfing for health related information in the www are interviewed regarding their internet use and the effects on their health behaviour and treatment adherence.
- Socio-economic data, surfing type, insurance status, diseases, treatment pathway, medical therapy.
- Usage of websites and apps regarding specific diseases, therapies, personal situation.
- Specific focus: used apps for diagnosis or medication, willingness to pay, evaluation of up-to-date innovations on the digital health market.

Usage of the internet/webbased services



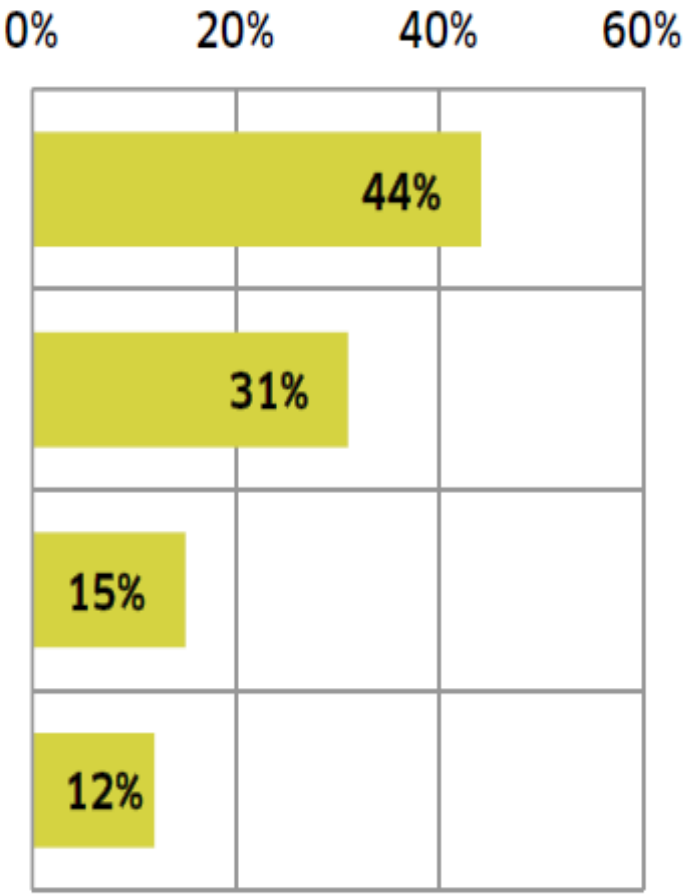
Effects of the app usage regarding own medication intake

I can now better understand and follow the instructions from my doctor regarding my medication.

I can now better deal with my medication and their regular intake.

My doctor already prescribed me another drug based on my internet search or app use.

I have already changed the dose or the combination of my medication by myself.



Open text question regarding ideas for improvement of apps for medication

Comprehensibility, usability, readability

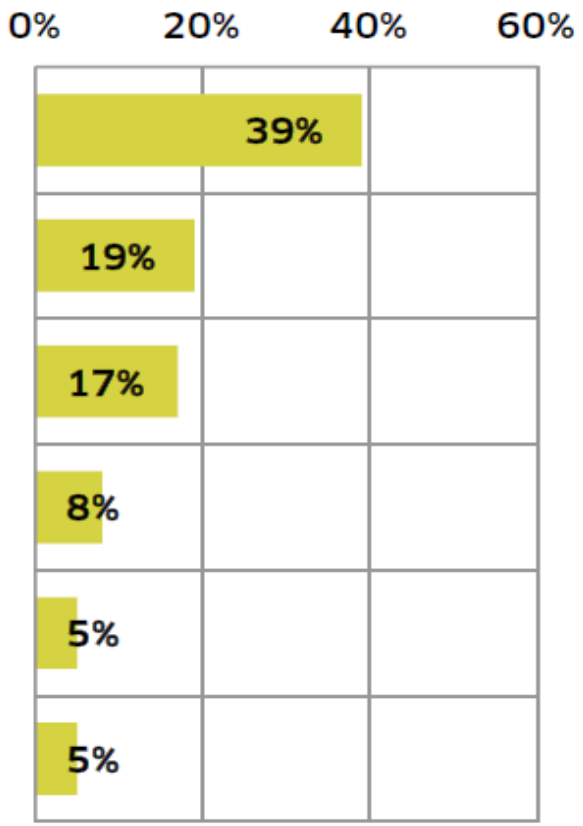
Transparency, high quality, integrity, up-to-dateness of the information

Drug-drug interactions when taking combinations of drugs

Searching and comparing similar pharmaceutical ingredients and package sizes

Recommendations for the daily life during medication intake (esp. Nutrition, life style)

Help with dosage and with intake and application of drugs



Main findings of the National ePatient Survey

- The use of digital health services by citizens and patients has positive effects on coping with diseases, treatment and medication adherence, discussions with health professionals, understanding of behavioural rules and the cooperation with other actors such as health insurances or rehabilitation facilities.

- Because of the parallel existence of the traditional health care system and the digital health care market citizens / patients would like to get recommendations for digital services from their GPs or health insurances.

- The comprehensibility, the usability and the readability of digital services are the biggest concerns of the users. Thus, digital health services often lose impact and intervention potential because users deny these attributes.

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Thank you for your attention

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