Ask Me 3™: A Tool for Health Literacy Promotion among Minority Populations
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Problem: Approximately 80 million U.S. adults have limited health literacy, which puts them at risk for poorer health outcomes (Berkman et al., 2011a).

Evidence: Health literacy refers to a set of skills that people need to function effectively in the healthcare environment (Berkman et al., 2011b). Limited health literacy rates are higher among elderly, minority, poor and low education (Kutner et al., 2006). The National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF) estimated that it costs about $100-200 billion annually (NPSF, 2013).

Strategy: The “Ask Me 3™” campaign by the NPSF was adapted. It is a patient education program to promote communication between healthcare providers and patients by having patients ask these questions:

1) What is my main problem?
2) What do I need to do?
3) Why is it important for me to do this?

Practice Change: During minority community health screenings, patients were educated about “Ask Me 3™” questions and given a copy.

Evaluation: Patients were initially surveyed for knowledge of the Ask Me 3 program and their comfort in asking the questions at healthcare visits, and followed up 3 months after.

Results: Of the 198 patients, 96% did not know about the “Ask Me 3” program, 87% expressed comfort in asking the 3 questions at health care visits. 43% consented to a follow-up phone call. Of those followed-up, 38% used the “Ask Me 3” questions and expressed satisfaction. 100% committed to using the “Ask Me 3” questions in the future. Interestingly, 100% nursing students (N= 32) who were trained to conduct the community health screenings were unaware of “Ask Me 3” program.

Recommendations: The “Ask Me 3” questions are simple important questions that can improve patient’s understanding of their health conditions. Results show that there is a lack of knowledge in the community about this tool.

Lessons Learned: Promotion of the “Ask Me 3” campaign must be continued, not only to the community but also healthcare students and professionals.
Bibliography:

