

Role of E-Health Literacy Among Health Care Professional in India

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The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has given definitions of health literacy. Personal health literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the ability to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others. Organizational health literacy is defined as the degree to which organizations equitably enable individuals to find, understand, and use information and services to inform health-related decisions and actions for themselves and others [1]. Health literacy and E-health literacy are interrelated and not the same. Various definitions of E-health are given in the literature. E-health is defined as “the use of emerging information and communication technology, especially the Internet, to improve or enable health and health care. Another definition by Norman states that E-health is the ability to appraise health information from electronic sources and apply the knowledge gained to addressing or solving a health problem [2,3].

The National Health Policy (NHP) 2017 of India has set some goals, and one of them is adopting digital technologies in health-care. The initiative, entitled the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) further emphasis on developing citizen centric digital healthcare and database systems. Some of the benefits of NDHM are listed here.

- Significant increase in efficacy, effectiveness, and transparency in the healthcare system
- Easy access to the patients to all public and private health care services
- Health care providers can easily access patient data with the patient's consent.
- Easy access to data by policymakers, programmers, and researchers.

After the development of the digital health care system, everyone associated with the health care system needs to update their abilities to utilize these systems. Inability to do so may lead to troubles at various levels, from patients to practitioners. Here, E-health literacy will play a pivotal role. The health care system is composed of the following.

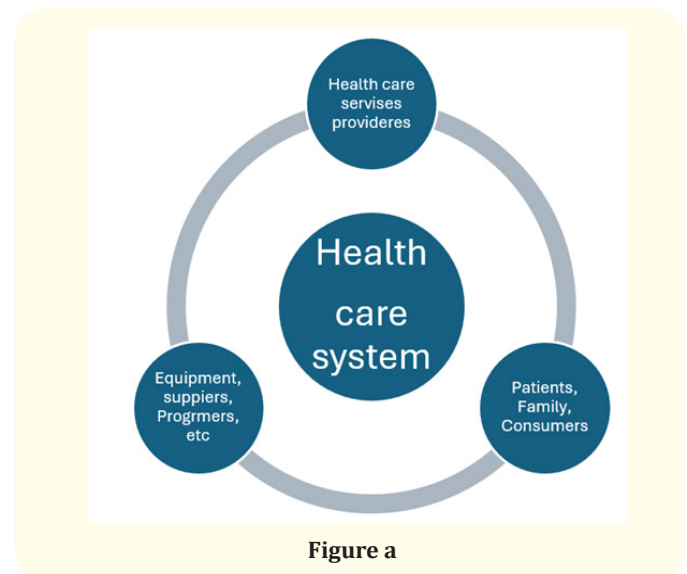


Figure a

According to various research studies, in India, the level of E-health literacy among citizens, health service seekers, and consumers is still limited. Particularly in rural India, the level of E-health literacy is poor in terms of adaptation to technology, exposure to digitalization, and low confidence [4,5]. Many adults are turning to the online medium for obtaining information related to health, smart phones are found to be the most frequently used tool. Still, there is a need for information seekers to develop skills to efficiently use digital facilities in the health care system [6].

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that the need E-health literacy will become a necessity in the upcoming years for health care service providers and seekers. In India, there is a need to increase the level of E-health literacy in the health care service seekers. The literature examining the level of E-health literacy among health care service providers in India is limited. Hence there is a vast scope of research on these directions.

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