The Effect of Educational Intervention on Improving Health Literacy Skills Among Dormitory Students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran

Rahman Panahi¹, Fereshteh Osmani², Malihe Pishvaei³ and Shamsaddin Niknami¹∗

¹Department of Health Education & Health Promotion, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran
²Department of Biostatistics, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran
³Department of Family Social Health, Social Development and Health Promotion Research Center, Gonabad University of Medical Sciences, Gonabad, Iran
∗Corresponding author: Department of Health Education & Health Promotion, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran. Tel: +98-2182883869, Email: niknamis@modares.ac.ir

Received 2018 June 09; Accepted 2019 April 08.

Keywords: Students, Health Literacy, Skills, Intervention

Dear Editor,

Health literacy (HL) is related to literacy and consist of the knowledge, motivation, and the capacity of individuals to access, understanding, evaluating and the use of health information in order to judge and make routine decisions about health care, disease prevention, and health promotion to maintain or enhance the quality of life (1). Because there was no clear evidence whether the HL of students of medical sciences is at a desirable level, several studies were carried out among the students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, which indicated that there was a wide range of inadequate and marginal HL (68.8%) and inadequate and problematic HL (37.2%) among them (2, 3).

In recent years, the student population of Iran has grown significantly. Therefore, it is important to recognize the effective factors in adapting the students to more healthy behaviors and reducing risk behaviors (2). The students were selected based on two criteria: first, their age and their training, and second, the pattern of a healthy lifestyle in the society, especially students of medical sciences who can effectively promote the public health (2). Given the wide range of the prevalence of inadequate, problematic, and marginal HL among medical students (2, 3), and the effect of HL on increasing health behaviors and improving access to health care (4); the purpose of the present study was to determine the effect of educational intervention on improving HL skills among dormitory students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Iran between 2016 and 2017.

The present study was a quasi-experimental interven-
test were used. In this study, the significance level was considered 0.05.

The results showed that there was no significant difference between the demographic and background variables and the mean scores of HL skills and total HL in the two groups before the intervention \((P > 0.05)\), but after the intervention, the comparison of the two groups showed that the mean scores of HL skills and total HL skills in the intervention group were significantly different in comparison to the control group \((P < 0.05)\). Also, the results indicated that in the intervention group during the study period, changes in the scores of HL skills and HL total were significant and parallel to the effect of training, while in the control group, the scores of these variables showed no significant change.

In general, the results of this study showed that educational intervention using Telegram can promote HL skills in the students. It seems that social networks, including Telegram, can be effective in engaging students in improving their HL skills owing to their popularity among them.

References
1. Vozikis A, Drivas K, Millioris K. Health literacy among university students in Greece: Determinants and association with self-perceived health, health behaviours and health risks. *Arch Public Health*. 2014;72(1):35. doi: 10.1186/2049-3258-72-35. [PubMed: 24987522]. [PubMed Central: PMC4066308].
2. Ramezankhani A, Ghafari M, Rakhshani F, Ghanbari S, Azimi S. [Comparison of health literacy between medical and non-medical students in Shahid Beheshti Universities in the academic year 92-93]. *Pajoohande*. 2015;20(2):78–85. Persian.
3. Panahi R, Ramezankhani A, Tavousi M, Osmani F, Ghazanfari E, Niknami S. Evaluation of health literacy and its influencing factors on dormitory students of Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran. *J Educ Commun Health*. 2017;3(3):30–6. doi: 10.21859/jech-03035.
4. Manganello JA. Health literacy and adolescents: A framework and agenda for future research. *Health Educ Res*. 2008;23(5):840–7. doi: 10.1093/her/cym069. [PubMed: 18024979].