



GLOBAL
SELF-CARE
FEDERATION



**SELF-CARE
LITERACY**

CONTENTS

3 Foreword

4 Summary

5 Introduction

6 Health literacy

Health literacy as a public health concern
The evolving global movement
Health literacy strategies

11 Self-care

The value of self-care
The Self-Care Readiness Index



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14 Self-care literacy

15 Exploring the impact of high and limited self-care literacy

Persona with high self-care literacy
Persona with limited self-care literacy

18 Accommodating the needs of people with high and limited self-care literacy

22 Potential opportunities to advance self-care literacy

24 About us



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FOREWORD

Health systems around the world are facing an incredible challenge due to rising costs and lack of policy coherence. Moreover, societal changes in e.g., demographics and technology increase the demand for people-centered health services and access to new innovations. A transformation of health systems is needed to strengthen the focus on self-care and self-treatment in relation to health management, disease prevention and health promotion.

Self-care has enormous potential to empower people throughout the lifecycle. Increasing self-care literacy and, thus, providing people with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to proactively maintain and promote their health and well-being is an important way to bridge inequity and utilize health systems more efficiently.

Recognising the importance of health literacy in relation to self-care, the Global Self-Care Federation has partnered with the Global Health Literacy Academy to promote self-care literacy as a health policy priority. This policy brief is a means to engage with relevant stakeholders, advance the debate and support policy change.



Judy Stenmark

Director General
Global Self-Care Federation

SUMMARY

This policy brief introduces the concept of self-care literacy as a sub-domain of health literacy. Applied in the context of self-care; self-care literacy refers to the knowledge, motivation and competencies of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, and maintain health and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider.

It also aims to present and promote self-care literacy as a health policy priority and to engage with stakeholders with a shared interest in health literacy.

The WHO Health 2020 strategy highlighted health literacy as a key element in promoting empowerment and participation in communities and health.

Health literacy is a critical enabler of self-care as it empowers people and societies to improve their health in the context of everyday life. People with strong health literacy skills enjoy better health and well-being, while those with weaker skills tend to engage in riskier behaviours and have poorer health.

However, there is growing evidence that limited health literacy is a serious public health concern which needs to be addressed. It is associated with poor health across a life course, reduced capacity to engage in self-care to maintain or improve one's health, and increased healthcare costs.

Strategies to integrate self-care literacy into policy and practice are needed. It is crucial to empower consumers in the decision-making process and enhance their self-esteem to engage not only in healthcare and prevention but also in health promotion and well-being.

The opportunities in this policy brief focus on ways to inform and qualify the advancement of self-care literacy through policy impact, information and communication, capacity building, as well as analytical insights.

Making self-care literacy a policy priority will help strengthen the ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote and maintain health, prevent disease, and manage illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider. This will contribute to the development of healthier populations and more cost-effective healthcare systems.



INTRODUCTION

This policy brief presents and discusses self-care literacy in relation to self-care as its sub-domain as well as an important area of interest and concern for policy, strategy, and practice to enhance health and well-being of consumers.

Health literacy entails the knowledge, motivation and competencies to access, understand, appraise and apply information concerning healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion in everyday life to maintain and promote quality of life during the life course.

Applied to the context of self-care; self-care literacy refers to knowledge, motivation and competencies of individuals, families, and communities to promote and maintain health, prevent disease, and to cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider.

Insights emerging from this discussion will help to identify and advance opportunities for agenda-setting, networking, and implementation of initiatives aimed at strengthening self-care literacy.

Engaging in positive and consistent self-care practices has never been more important. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted just how vulnerable our health systems are. Adopting good self-care habits beyond the pandemic is one of the best ways through which we can continue to protect individuals, communities, healthcare professionals and health systems.

Actively managing one's own health and well-being through self-care has numerous benefits, including better choice, better care, and better value.

Due to the constraints of health systems and decreasing availability of healthcare professionals, the demand for self-care literacy is constantly increasing. If self-care, however, does not go hand in hand with health education, it may result in incorrect self-diagnoses and missed opportunities to take right measures at the right times, which may lead to undesirable consequences.

Building on an introduction to the concepts of health literacy and self-care; examples of self-care literacy and its importance for consumers with various health literacy characteristics are provided. This is followed by relevant opportunities for improving health literacy in various ways. This policy brief is designed to help to inform and qualify the work on health literacy worldwide.

HEALTH LITERACY

In recent years, health literacy has gained considerable attention across the globe as research has demonstrated that optimizing health literacy has a potential to improve health and well-being as well as reduce health inequalities.

Health literacy is a critical enabler of self-care as it empowers people and societies to improve their health in the context of everyday life.

It entails the knowledge, motivation, and competencies to access, understand appraise and apply information to form judgment and make decisions regarding healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion in everyday life to maintain and improve quality of life during the life course.¹

Health literacy is both a means and an outcome of actions. Addressing health literacy requires a holistic and integrated policy approach where many actors, settings, and sectors collaborate to improve health literacy of individuals and communities to create conducive environments in support of health and well-being.

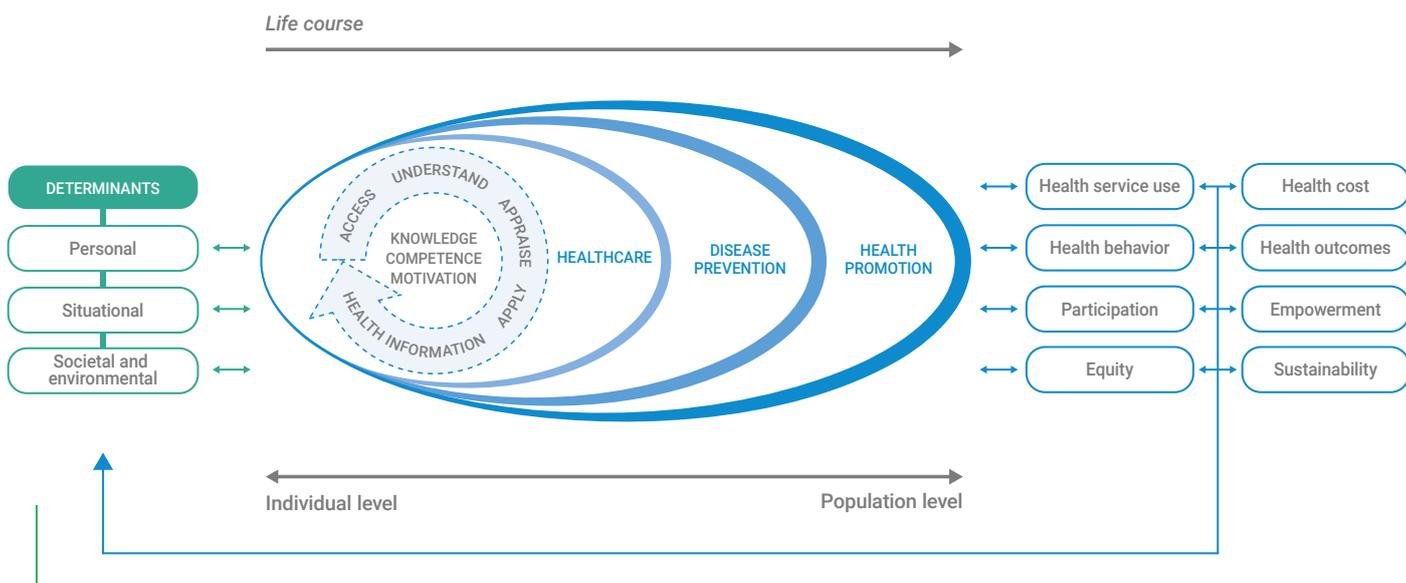
¹Sørensen et al. (2012). Health literacy and public health: a systematic review and integration of definitions and models. BMC Public Health 12:80.



HEALTH LITERACY AS A PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

In recent years, there has been an exponential growth in health literacy research across the world. One of the studies with strong political impact was the European Health Literacy Survey (HLS-EU) which offered a generic model and definition of health literacy and measured health literacy in eight countries (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The conceptual model of health literacy

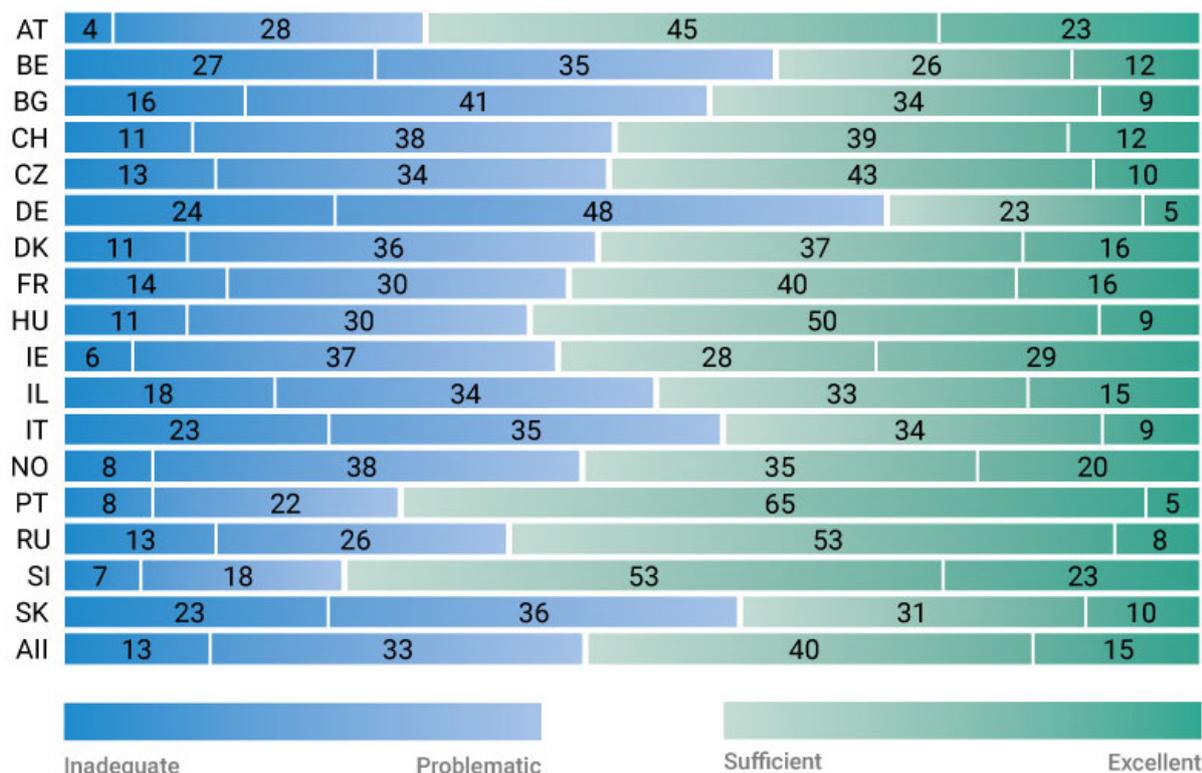


The study results indicated that limited health literacy is associated with poor health across a life course, a reduced capacity to engage in self-care to maintain or improve one’s health, and increased healthcare costs.

Importantly, the study revealed that health literacy is a serious public health concern which needs to be addressed since more than one in three people, and in some countries two out of three, identified as having limited health literacy.

The second European Health Literacy Study (HLS19) measured health literacy in 17 countries (Figure 2). In addition to general health literacy, it focused on digital health literacy, navigation literacy and vaccination literacy³.

Figure 2. Population health literacy in 17 European countries (HLS19 study)



Percentage of respondents by categorical level of General HL as measured by the HLS19-Q12, for each country and the mean of all countries.

Source: HLS₁₉ Consortium

Notably, research from around the world shows that health literacy is important for welfare states as well as low- and middle-income countries; moreover, there is a strong social gradient indicating profound health literacy inequalities between and within countries.^{4 5 6}

³ M-POHL (2021)

⁴ M-POHL (2021)

⁵ Dodson et al. (2015). Health literacy toolkit for low and middle-income countries: a series of information sheets to empower communities and strengthen health systems. New Delhi: World Health Organization, Regional Office for South-East Asia.

⁶ Duong et al. (2016). Measuring health literacy in Asia: Validation of the HLS-EU-Q47 survey tool in six Asian countries. *J Epidemiol*, 27(2):80-86.

THE EVOLVING GLOBAL MOVEMENT

Since the 1970s, health literacy has been considered as an important outcome of education. In the 1980s, research revealed that health literacy was also related to health outcomes while during the 1990s it added a focus on improving quality of care in clinical settings. In the past decades, health literacy became a political priority due to its impact on healthcare, disease prevention and health promotion.

In 2009, the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) recognized health literacy as an important factor for ensuring significant health outcomes and called for action plans to promote it. The WHO Health 2020 strategy highlighted health literacy as a key element in promoting empowerment and participation in communities and healthcare. Moreover, the Shanghai Declaration on promoting health in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, declared health literacy a critical determinant of health and a crucial element for the realization of the sustainable development goals. It called for the development, implementation, and monitoring of intersectoral strategies at national and local levels to strengthen health literacy in all populations. At the same time:

- **Academic institutions** started to incorporate health literacy in research agendas and curriculum development to enhance the evidence and capacity within the field. There is a growing demand to also include health literacy in primary and secondary education to improve the health of children and adolescents.
- **Governments** across the world have started to implement health literacy policy goals, strategies, and action plans to enhance health literacy. Austria included improving health literacy as one of ten national health goals. Norway launched a health literacy strategy to improve health of the population and make the health system more accessible. The Scottish government has developed health literacy action plans in collaboration with the national health system (NHS).
- **Non-governmental organizations** such as the International Health Literacy Association (IHLA) and the International Union of Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE) currently work to improve health literacy of people and professionals as well as support health literacy research and practice that can inform future developments internationally. Health Literacy Europe, the Asian Health Literacy Association and the African Health Literacy Associations focus on regional efforts to improve health literacy. Furthermore, in many countries around the world, national networks and organizations have emerged to develop health literacy locally.
- **Industry**, and in particular companies working in the health sector, are increasingly adopting health literacy agendas to create a culture of health for their employees and clients.

HEALTH LITERACY STRATEGIES

Investment in health literacy strategies is critical for disease prevention and management as well as improving population health. Health literacy strategies are also crucial to maintain health protection during public health emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a modifiable social determinant of health, there are multiple ways to improve health literacy. Interventions and structural efforts can focus on widening access to information, education, and

conducting effective communication. Moreover, policies and strategies can help enhance health literacy in populations: such as facilitate workforce capacity building.

There is a strong association between socio-economic disadvantages and limited health literacy. Marginalised people and people in more disadvantaged communities may be less able to access and engage in health literacy activities than well-resourced people.



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SELF-CARE

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines self-care as “The ability of individuals, families and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a health-care provider”.

Thus, the scope of self-care in this definition includes health promotion; disease prevention and control; self-medication; providing care to dependent persons; seeking hospital/ specialist care if necessary; and rehabilitation, including palliative care. WHO highlights that self-care interventions are underpinned by the key principles of ethics and human rights embracing both people-centeredness and health systems’ approaches.

Self-care is often used as an umbrella term that entails the closely related notions of self-treatment, self-management, self-efficacy, self-monitoring, self-help, patient and consumer empowerment and personal care.

-  **Self-management**; mainly used in the context of chronic conditions
-  **Self-efficacy**; mainly used in the context of chronic conditions
-  **Self-monitoring**; often found in the context of digital health
-  **Self-help**; mainly occurring in the context of mental health
-  **Personal care**; mostly used in the context of home care delivered by healthcare

The term ‘self-care’ implies a focus on individual autonomy and actions, yet self-care is also influenced by environmental, economic and social determinants which go beyond the individual. Moreover, governments and policymakers play a substantial role in creating environments that either enable or inhibit self-care.



THE VALUE OF SELF-CARE

Universal health coverage aims to ensure that all people, everywhere, can access quality essential health services. Yet, the increased capability of health systems to treat and monitor patients has improved health outcomes at higher economic cost to governments and citizens.

Although, the global demographic shifts such as ageing populations and the rise of chronic diseases are driving greater demand for people-centred health services, the availability of healthcare providers is predicted to be decreasing towards 2035. Reforming health services to include and advance self-care practices is therefore increasingly becoming a priority.

According to WHO, global spending on health more than doubled in real terms over the past two decades, reaching US\$ 8.5 trillion in 2019, or 9.8% of global GDP. But it was unequally distributed, with high income countries accounting for approximately 80%. Health spending in low-income countries was financed primarily by out-of-pocket spending and external aid while government spending dominated in high income countries (70%).

The financial pressure is leading to a growing impetus to further engage citizens in individual health practices, such as self-care, to ease the burden on overstretched health systems and to manage costs. For instance, based on economic modelling, the cost-saving potential of self-care in Australia is estimated to be \$1.300 - \$7.515 per hospital per patient per year along with significant lower hospital re-admission rates . In US, every dollar spent on over-the-counter medicines saves the healthcare system more than seven dollars .

Self-care, as an enabler for better health and well-being, offers a means to improve universal health coverage through self-medication, self-management, and nutrition. This, in turn, may benefit not only individuals but also their families and communities.

⁷ WHO (2021). Global expenditure on health: public spending on the rise? Geneva.

⁸ Nichols T, Calder R, Morgan M, Lawn S, Beauchamp A, Trezona A, Byambasuren O, Bowman J, Duggan M, Clinton-McHarg T, Willis K, Kearns R, Harris-Roxas B, Wardle J, Litt J, Menzies D, Dawda P, Benrimoj S, Dineen-Griffin S, Banfield M, Fetherston H, Klepac B (2020), Self-care for health: a national policy blueprint, Policy paper 2020-01, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University, Melbourne.

⁹ The Value of OTC Medicines to the United States, IRI, Mar. 2019

THE SELF-CARE READINESS INDEX

The Self-Care Readiness Index was launched by the Global Self-Care Federation in 2021. It is a tool which can be used to promote the importance of self-care literacy.

Being an advocacy-centered research initiative, the Index at its core has been developed as a conversation starter which can serve as a practical tool to better understand and recognize what the enablers of self-care are and how to improve them. It also serves as a catalyst for further debate on the importance of self-care as an effective tool to improve the long-term sustainability and productivity of healthcare systems and aims to enhance individual health outcomes.

The Index is based on four key enablers needed to realize the full potential of self-care in each health system - the importance of stakeholder support and adoption; consumer and patient empowerment; self-care health policy; and regulatory environments.

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT AND ADOPTION

Support and trust among all stakeholders – healthcare providers, patients and consumers, and regulators and policymakers – are essential to maximizing adoption of self-care behaviours and products.

CONSUMER AND PATIENT EMPOWERMENT

Self-care delivers the greatest value when consumers and patients have a high degree of health literacy, understand the value of prevention, and are confident and empowered to make their own health decisions.

SELF-CARE HEALTH POLICY

Building trust among stakeholders and increasing health literacy and digital access to personal health records are good first steps toward increasing self-care. If healthcare leaders wish to leverage the full value of self-care, the right policy and regulatory frameworks need to be put in place. Thus, the extent to which policymakers recognize and support the economic value of self-care, promote self-care as an affordable health solution, and provide relevant financial incentives all contribute to the adoption of self-care products and practices by consumers and patients, healthcare providers, and health systems.

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENTS

Regulations and processes governing the approval of new products and prescription to OTC switches, distribution, advertising, and pricing determine the ease of consumer access to self-care products as well as industry's ability to drive innovation and adoption of self-care solutions.

SELF-CARE LITERACY

Self-care literacy describes the specific sub-domain of health literacy related to self-care. Other related sub-types of health literacy include medication literacy, both over-the-counter (OTC) medicines and prescription medicines, as well as disease-related literacy, such as diabetes literacy which also involves elements of self-care and self-management.

Building on our research, self-care literacy can be considered as enabling cost-effective strategies which can empower consumers to find, understand, judge, and use information to make conscious decisions as well as manage their health more appropriately to maintain and enhance quality of life. Unfortunately, the same research suggests that self-care literacy is currently underutilised.

By obtaining and using the information and resources available, people can manage their own health and thereby contribute to improving their health and preventing disease. Self-care literacy, through self-treatment, also includes responsible use of over-the-counter medicines.

Effective self-care literacy by consumers relies on the ability of health professionals to initiate and support consumer engagement in collaborative care, such as planning, decision-making, and interventions. It makes appropriate education and training of health professionals essential in the facilitation of self-care support.



EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF SELF-CARE LITERACY

A recent scientific scoping literature review commissioned by the Global Self-Care Federation revealed significant differences in self-care literacy and outcomes for consumers.

People with strong self-care literacy skills enjoy better health and well-being, while those with weaker skills tend to engage in riskier behaviour and have poorer health.

To showcase the potential impact of self-care literacy, two personas are sketched. One illustrates a consumer with high self-care literacy, the other a consumer with limited self-care literacy.



PERSONA WITH HIGH SELF-CARE LITERACY

The motivation of the consumer with high self-care literacy is to engage in their own health and self-care to improve and promote health status.

Self-care through using self-care products is used to prevent unnecessary visits to general practitioners. Statistically, a consumer of such products with high self-care literacy is more likely to be female. Often these women are mothers that care for their children and therefore engage in self-care to prevent diseases at home.

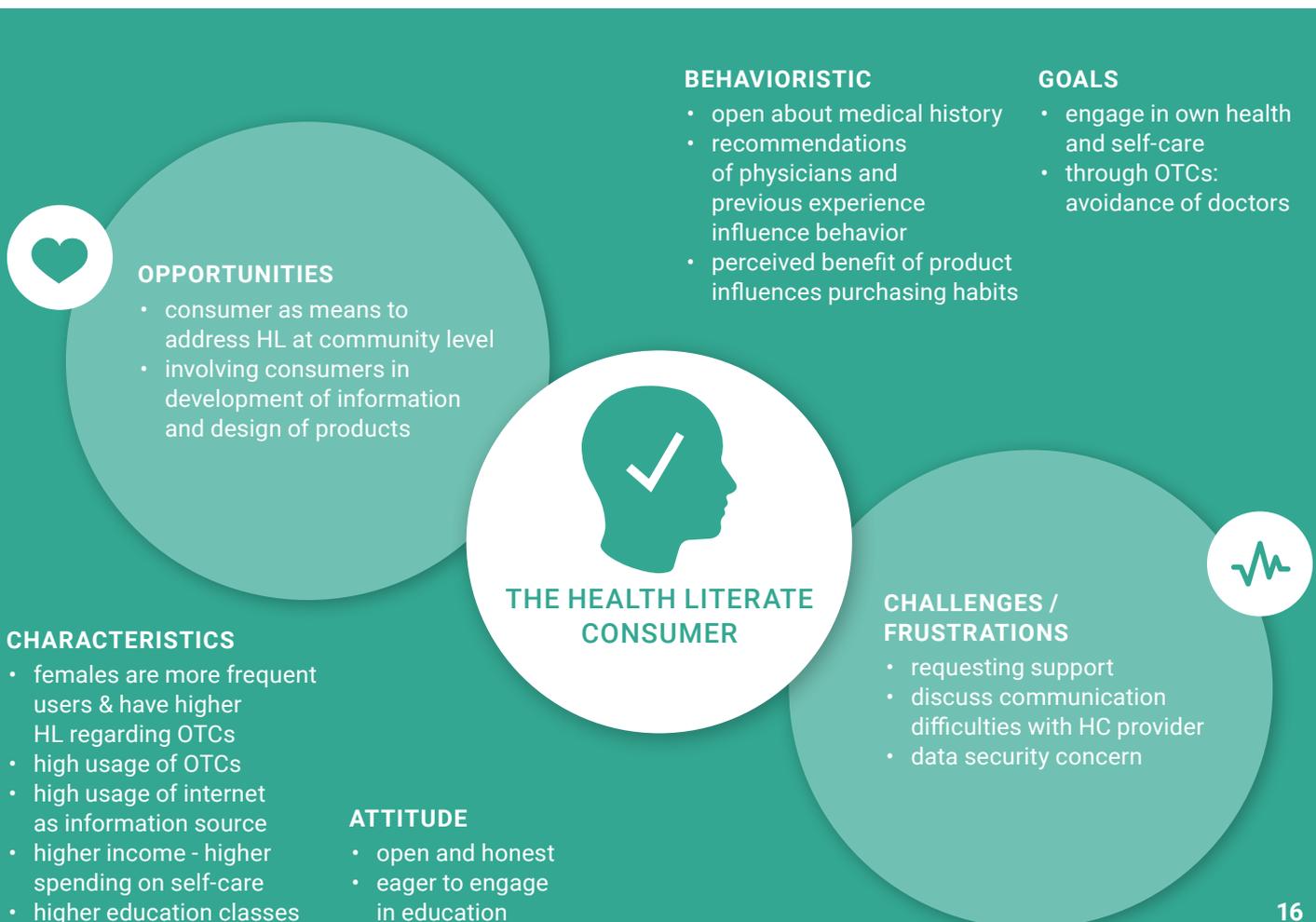
A self-care literate consumer tends to actively engage in health promoting activities, using the internet more frequently to gain health information, for instance via health portals.

The self-care literate consumer often belongs to a middle and high-income socio-economic group, which enables them to spend more on self-care and self-care products.

However, studies indicate that educational status is not necessarily associated with high knowledge of OTC products. The main needs and wants that were identified for this type of consumers are accessibility, reasonable pricing, and effectiveness of OTCs.

A consumer with high self-care literacy is often open and transparent, especially in relation to their own medical history, and eager to engage in education regarding health.

However, those consumers also face challenges and frustrations. Firstly, they tend to feel hesitant about requesting support and discussing challenges regarding communication with their healthcare provider, for instance, a pharmacist. Secondly, as the internet is a crucial means for collection of personal information, self-care literate consumers exhibit privacy and data security concerns.



PERSONA WITH LIMITED SELF-CARE LITERACY

The main goal of a consumer with limited self-care literacy is to cure symptoms and prevent diseases, while paying less attention to health promotion.

Compared to a high health literate consumer, a consumer with limited self-care literacy exhibits lesser ability and motivation to access, understand, appraise, and apply health information.

Less health literate consumers that engage in fewer self-care activities are mostly people aged 65+. Although, a less self-care literate consumer is not necessarily less educated when it comes to consuming OTCs - many have a college education or a degree- limited self-care literacy occurs more often among unemployed people.

Consumers with limited health literacy often struggle with serious health conditions and

generally poorer health status than those with higher health literacy. They are also more associated with limited knowledge on the risks and side effects of OTCs.

Additionally, consumers with limited health literacy have difficulties in understanding and appraising the front of package labelling of OTC medicines.

A less self-care literate consumer is characterised by having little confidence in understanding health information and low self-esteem with regards to making informed health decisions.

Ultimately, such consumers face more challenges than consumers with high self-care literacy. Often, they have poorer communication skills regarding health topics and greater difficulties in understanding OTC medication labels.



ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH HIGH AND LIMITED SELF-CARE LITERACY

The scientific literature review commissioned by the Global Self-Care Federation revealed that a consumer journey differs depending on their level of self-care literacy and therefore, their needs must be met differently.





CONSUMERS WITH HIGH HEALTH LITERACY PROMOTE AND IMPROVE THEIR HEALTH

The main goal of a self-care literate consumer during their journey is predominantly driven by the aim to promote and improve their own health. This results in some touchpoints, where key players in the industry can interact with a consumer and facilitate their efforts.

Consumers become aware of the product or activity mainly through marketing and advertisements, especially online. Therefore, the industry can enhance digital possibilities of health education and consumer information.¹⁰

Moreover, there is an abundance of information available online, which results in difficulties for consumers to appraise the reliability of the information source. This indicates that

healthcare providers and other stakeholders should provide reliable and easy-to-understand information for consumers to facilitate the decision-making process.

Additionally, there is an opportunity to involve and empower consumers in the development and review of consumer information as well as planning, design and delivery of strategies and projects to meet their needs and wants regarding their purchase and engagement in self-care activities.

Investing in high health literate consumers at community level can act as a means of improving safety and quality of care of the broader community.

	AWARENESS	INFORMATION ACQUISITION	COMMUNICATION	FINAL STAGE OF SELF-CARE
PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unfulfilled need • marketing or advertisements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • through internet • recommendations from HCP • personal sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on a similar level - basic understanding • open to provide medical history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making a purchase • active engagement in self-care
MOTIVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceived need • perceived benefit • personal experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wants to self-engage • evaluate sources • engage in motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-care as a form of avoiding GP • intrinsic motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging in one's own health • ability to apply knowledge
EMOTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • curious • eager to engage • not fully aware 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • motivated • curious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open-minded • motivated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-confident • empowered
BARRIERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unaware of possibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abundance of information • reliability • asking for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data security concerns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uncertainty • availability • barriers in understanding the product

¹⁰ Hayward et al., 2020.



CONSUMERS WITH LIMITED HEALTH LITERACY FOCUS ON TREATMENT AND PREVENTION OF DISEASES

The main goal of consumers with limited self-care literacy who engage in self-care activities is to prevent disease and avoid the deterioration of their own health status. As this consumer group tends to have less focus on prevention and health promotion, it is often the group that requires interventions most urgently due to their worse health status.

Based on their many difficulties in the decision-making process and high-frequency usage of OTC medicines, there is a big potential to engage with less self-care literate consumers.

In the stage of awareness, there is an opportunity to establish service options to reach less self-care literate consumers and provide them with

guidance. Moreover, it is important to create easy-to-understand labels on products and involve consumers in the design of information to ensure that they can find, understand, appraise, and apply the information received.

Additionally, pharmacists can be specifically targeted to support less self-care literate consumers in order to provide information and overcome communication barriers.

Moreover, recommendations of physicians, previous history, and experience regarding self-care activities can influence self-care choices and product purchasing behaviour as well as the perceived benefit of the product.

	AWARENESS	INFORMATION ACQUISITION	COMMUNICATION	FINAL STAGE OF SELF-CARE
PROCESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> poor health status - requires intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> internet sources personal sources and experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> difficulties in communicating with HCP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> high use of OTC medicines still great uncertainty
MOTIVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feels urgent need cure symptoms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wants to cure symptoms still pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> urgent need only option (instead of the internet) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> curing symptoms stilling pain
EMOTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aware of need unsure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uncertain overwhelmed by information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> overwhelmed ashamed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uncertain low self-esteem
BARRIERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> uncertainty barrier in understanding what to do next 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appraising reliability understanding health information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understanding labels understanding side effects and risks of OTCs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> making own decision regarding purchase



UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Health and self-care literacy is everyone's business. There is a great potential for healthcare providers and other stakeholders to involve consumers more.

It is crucial to empower consumers in decision-making processes and enhance their self-esteem to engage not only in healthcare and prevention but also in health promotion and well-being.

Boosting the capabilities and capacity of the workforce involved in providing self-care support is necessary to enable them to respond adequately to people with limited and high self-care literacy.

There is a need for targeted services, especially aimed at older people, who tend to have limited self-care literacy, as well as at people with low socioeconomic status.

There is an opportunity to involve pharmacists in the communication process with consumers, as they are the healthcare provider group working most closely with them.

POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE SELF-CARE LITERACY

A range of opportunities which could advance self-care literacy have emerged during the development of this policy brief. While some of these opportunities could be advanced by GSCF and its members, others fall within the domain of different stakeholders in the health area.

GSCF seeks to engage with stakeholders with a shared interest in health literacy to examine how these opportunities could be explored and advanced, either separately or in collaboration with other actors.

A. POLICY IMPACT

Increase individual empowerment and facilitate better use of health resources through implementation of health and self-care literacy as a cross-cutting value in strategies, action plans, and programmes touching upon self-care.

1. Mobilize self-care literacy advocates

Forge a broader alliance of health literacy and self-care advocates to make the case that investments in self-care and self-care literacy result in healthier populations and lower costs.

2. Increase self-care literacy agenda-setting

Increase advocacy through relevant means to clarify and align approaches of members and stakeholders towards the value of health and self-care literacy as a key driver of self-care to inspire action and unite diverse actors.

3. Develop a global coalition on health and self-care literacy

Develop a global coalition on health and self-care literacy, with the goal of increasing health and self-care literacy advocacy worldwide.

B. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

Provide high quality information that is widely and easily accessible for consumers to make informed decisions and healthier choices.

4. Improve clear information

Review text and illustrations to enhance clarity of language and comprehension, bearing in mind that large proportions of populations are facing literacy as well as health literacy challenges.

5. Enhance user-friendliness

Create user-friendly products and involve consumers in the planning, design, and delivery to ensure that they meet their needs and wants regarding health and self-care literacy.

6. Enhance quality of media and marketing

Assess and strengthen the quality of health-related information in media and marketing to enhance health and self-care literacy by providing reliable, easy-to-understand and timely information for consumers to facilitate the decision-making process.

7. Target at-risk groups to reduce health literacy inequalities

Recognise and target specific needs of people in vulnerable situations at individual, community, and population levels to bridge the health literacy divide and increase equity and inclusion.

C. CAPACITY BUILDING

Build health and self-care capacity at individual, community, organisational and system levels.

8. Enhance self-care education

Educate and empower consumers enabling them to access, understand, appraise and apply information to make informed decisions and healthier choices as well as to strengthen their healthcare and self-care to maintain and promote their health and well-being. Support professional development

Embed health and self-care literacy into professional education and continuing professional development as well as into workforce accreditation standards, including the deployment of multi-disciplinary teams.

9. Increase digital self-care literacy

Improve and scale-up people-centred, digital health solutions to reduce the digital divide and create more equitable and inclusive health.

10. Build health literate organizations

Implement organisational self-assessment of health literacy practices, capabilities, and responsiveness including their understanding of health literacy needs within their catchment populations.

D. ANALYTICAL INSIGHTS

Build an evidence-based case for health literacy.

11. Measuring health literacy status and progress

Apply concise, valid, and reliable measures for health literacy assessment and evaluations as well as performance indicators in public health monitoring systems.

12. Health literacy research

Invest in research to identify and address health and self-care literacy needs in disadvantaged communities and at-risk population groups, particularly culturally and linguistically diverse communities, using approaches that engage communities in their implementation.



ABOUT US

The Global Self-Care Federation is dedicated to a world where self-care increasingly contributes to better health and more sustainable healthcare systems. We represent associations and manufacturers in the self-care industry, working closely with our members and relevant stakeholder groups to ensure evidence-based self-care products and solutions are recognized as key contributors to health for individuals and systems worldwide.

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The Global Health Literacy Academy is an independent, global leader in health literacy by design. Working with international organizations, governments, academia, industry, and civic society the aim is to build health literacy capacity with sustainable impact.

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