

Progressing action on effective ways of developing health literate organisations

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Making hospital services more responsive to patients' health literacy needs and easier for patients and their families to access, navigate, engage with and make decisions about their health, has the potential to improve patients' health outcomes (Brega et al., 2017). In response to the results of a health literacy audit in 2014, a health literacy committee was established in Galway University Hospitals (GUH) and a range of activities undertaken. A review of the activities instigated, implemented and evaluated was undertaken from 2015 to 2021 by the Committee was undertaken in 2022.

Aim

To progress action on the development of a responsive organisation.

Design and Methods

Mixed methods are used including inclusive participatory approaches.

Results

An overview of some of the documented activities that have occurred 2015- 2021 is displayed in Table 1.

Public Patient Involvement

The Health Literacy Committee includes all stakeholders with patient representation.

Dissemination

Sixsmith J., McKenna, V. & Byrne, N. (2022). *Report of GUH Health Literacy Committee Activities: 2014-2021: Towards a Health Literacy Friendly Organisation*. Submitted to GUH.

Table 1

Identified Activity	Action
Establish a HL Committee	Established in 2015 with broad representation from: a range of hospital staff, the Patient's Council and the Health Promotion Research Centre, NUI Galway
Logic model framework to plan activities	Developed with establishment of HL Committee, aligned to hospital, HSE and Department of Health policy initiatives.
Streamline governance and workstreams in producing health information in GUH,	<p>Policy on written patient information with resource tools developed and ratified (Gallagher et al., 2017) and available on-site intranet system</p> <p>Resource tools scaled out nationally in a set of Communicating Clearly Guidelines (HSE, 2017).*</p> <p>Workshops developed to upskill staff in policy use for new and revision of materials (Jan – May 2018).</p> <p>Review and update of policy commenced October 2020.</p>
Implement recommended changes to Outpatient (OPD) and Inpatient appointment letters	<p>Revision of outpatient letters.</p> <p>Template available for use by various clinical directorates. Potential to be adapted and scaled out across department with management input.</p> <p>Liaison with Digital Team on HSE digitisation.</p>
Improve quality of existing health information leaflets and booklets	<p>Contribution to development of discharge plan booklet (Feb, 2018).</p> <p>Development of patient and visitor information booklet (May, 2019).</p>
Develop and implement training plan on interpersonal skills and plain English writing	<p>Plain English workshops provided by National Adult Literacy Agency.</p> <p>To date 60+ staff attended, in person and online.</p> <p>HL Committee members participated in Pilot HSE communication modules for staff (oral), now finalized available on national HSE website.**</p>
Advocate for and assist with prioritising physical environmental improvements	Navigation activities: Walking interviews used through different areas of organisation reinforced need for change and contributed to mobility and access reports (Jan 2019 and Feb 2019).
OPD Patient Survey	Instigated and undertaken by the HL Committee (Oct 2019 and report completed April 2020).

*<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/communications/communicatingclearly/guidelines-for-communicating-clearly-using-plain-english.pdf> ** <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/our-health-service/healthcare-communication/communication-skills.html>