

BACKGROUND

- Poor health literacy skills increase patient risk
- Inadequate or misleading information leads to poor lifestyle decision-making in the community
- Empowering individuals to be active partners in their healthcare is embedded in Irish and international health policy
- Highly intelligent people can have poor health literacy skills



"In the nineteenth century health was transformed by clear, clean water. In the twenty-first century, health will be transformed by clean clear knowledge."
(Sir Muir Gray, Director UK National Service and NHS Chief Knowledge Officer) Knowledge

AIM

By assisting public and patients to find reliable online health information, HEAL (**Health Education And Libraries**) will support and promote health education and literacy in Ireland

HEAL is being piloted in the Dublin area by Dublin City and County public libraries, librarians and staff in St Vincent's Healthcare Group, and researchers from the UCD School of Nursing Midwifery and Health Systems.

METHODS

- Baseline survey disseminated through Dublin Public Libraries and SVUH
- Focus groups to test and advise on resources developed by HEAL
- Promote HEAL to GP Practices and Community Health Services
- Promote adoption of NALA/HIQA Health Literacy Quality Standards for Hospitals
- Beta website to identify tools, formats and topics of most use



<https://navigatehealthinfo.org>

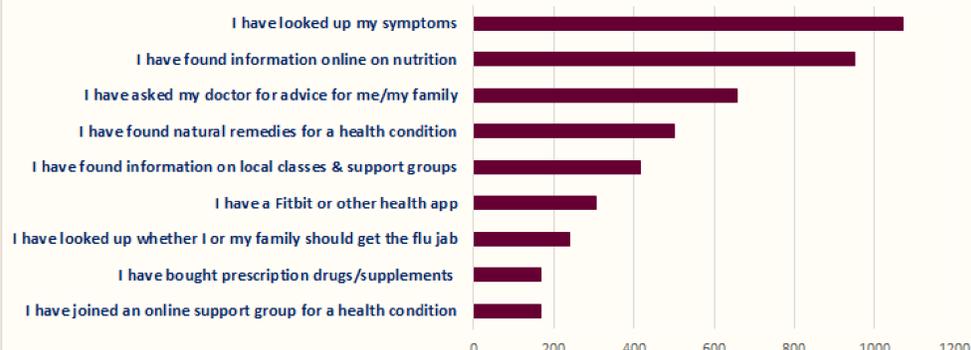
Pilot HEAL partners (*l to r*): Marian Keyes (dlr Lexicon), Niamh Lucey (SVUH), Bernie Meenaghan (S. Dublin Libraries), Éidin Ní Shé (UCD), Sheila Kelly (Dublin City Libraries), Anne-Marie Kelly (Dublin City Libraries), Anne Madden (SVUH).
Missing: Thilo Kroll (UCD), Edmund Keyes (Fingal Libraries), Helen McMahon (S. Dublin Libraries), Caroline Rowan (SMH), Gerry McManus (SVUH).

ACTIONS

- Analysis of comments from the survey by Dr. Éidin Ní Shé (UCD) and Ms. Sheila Kelly (Dublin City Libraries) to identify key themes and a blueprint to prioritise future actions.
- Development of online modules in partnership with the UCD IGNITE Connect project and guided by public and patient involvement - 'with' or 'by', instead of 'about' or 'for'.
- Raise the project profile with GP practices
- Identify and support patient information requirements at key points of need (handover, discharge, transitions, etc) in hospitals
- For further information please contact author or visit website

SURVEY FEEDBACK

Q2: Select all the statements that are true about you.



Q11 Have you any ideas on how we can improve health information in libraries?

"Organise health information classes/groups to give advice on numerous different areas of health which can help so many individuals in the community to understand more about an area they seek help in"

"Educate the public as to difference between validated and unvalidated health information to enable them to be more discerning in seeking info."

"Promote trustworthy health websites"

"Is breá liom na displays a dhéannann sibh sa leabharlann leis na leabhair sláinte - coimead suas é seo! Health info sessions e.g health nutritionist do paisti agus do daoine fasta."

"Link public libraries with more trusted online databases that the public can access from home, journal, talks on best practices and possible debates/events to inform the public on various medical options, eg Flu Jab, Vaccinations, etc."

Q5 Do you trust the information you find online?

"Different sites give different information. I don't know which sites to trust"

"Depends on source. Overwhelmed with information from google search. I would try to find a trustworthy recognized source"

"No. Because a lot of the times it can be quite a negative view of the issue which, after consulting with a GP, ends up not being that fatalistic ... if you google it, a lot of the times it comes up as something really serious and sometimes even terminal."

"Never knowing what is really true, too many options for answers"

KEY POINTS

1. Patients and the public are keen to take control of their own healthcare and that of their family.
2. Libraries are a trusted route to quality information.
3. There are legal, practical and ethical obligations to ensure patients understand their treatment and can make informed choices.
4. There is a role for "information prescriptions".
5. Public and patient safety is improved through health literacy initiatives.
6. Adoption of some/all of the NALA/HIQA HL Standards will enhance quality of care for patients.