

25. Manual of Good Practices in Health Literacy – Training Healthcare Professionals

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In Portugal, 5 in 10 people present low levels of health literacy, 11% of them have inadequate levels and 28% problematic. This low level of health literacy of the Portuguese population entails individual and social costs that, ultimately, lead to a decrease of the autonomy of the individual.

Nowadays, the increase of the population's health literacy levels is seen as both strategic and crucial, as well as a way to improve the population's quality of life and well-being, arising as both a challenge and a priority. Promoting health literacy presents itself as an effective strategy that addresses both health and education, endowing the individual with reflection and action regarding the opportunities to promote their health.

The healthcare professional, apart from his clinical skills, may, through a good verbal and non-verbal communicational process, guide and influence the individual's decisions, especially in cases of low health literacy levels. The communication between the individual and the healthcare professional plays an important role in the whole interaction. Sometimes, the difficulty in understanding the communication with the healthcare professional may affect the acceptance of proposals, recommendations and associated behavioural change.

With this in mind, the "Manual of Good Practices in Health Literacy – Training Healthcare Professionals" was developed to deepen the concept of health literacy, emphasising the importance of disease prevention and health promotion *versus* disease treatment, and has as one of its goals to encourage the development of effective interaction and communication strategies by healthcare professionals, facilitating the information transmission process. With the information, healthcare professionals can familiarise themselves with good practices in promoting health literacy in different contexts such as in primary healthcare, hospitals, pharmacies and in the Portuguese SNS24 (NHS25), as well as at different stages of the life-cycle. The Manual will hopefully be used by healthcare professionals as an aid to stimulate their reflection and action regarding the opportunities in promoting health literacy among the population.

In this Manual, conceptual aspects related to health literacy are initially addressed, followed by an analysis of the main obstacles inherent to its promotion, given their importance in obtaining positive results, as well as behavioural change strategies. It also addresses the