

Health literacy programs help immigrants access health services

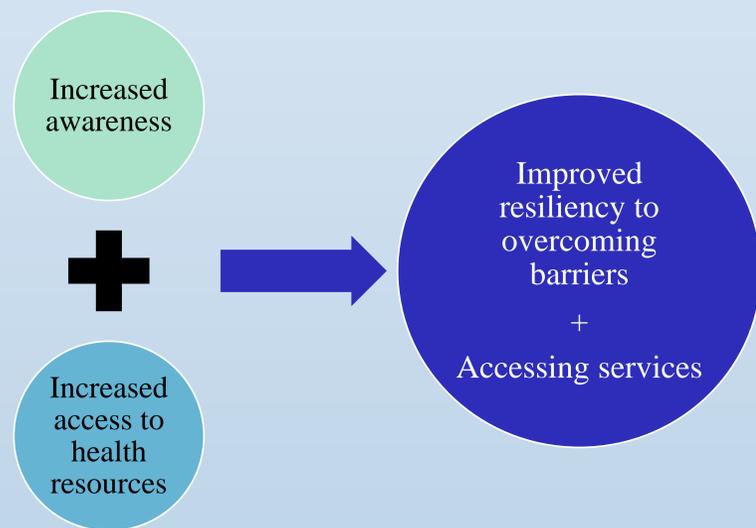


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Barriers to Accessing Health Services

- Canada's healthcare system has been shown to be a **significant obstacle course** for immigrants nationwide [1].
- Three specific barriers cause *inadequate healthcare access* for immigrants [2-4]: 1) cultural differences, 2) lack of access to healthcare resources, and 3) a general unawareness of health options.

What We Can Do: Educate



Program Procedures

- We created a 7-session health literacy program called **“ACHIEVE” (Accessing Canadian Health for Immigrants: Empowerment, Voice, & Enablement)** run once a week for seven, consecutive weeks.
- Sessions will run 2.5 hours long and consist of lectures, group discussions, class activities, and homework assignments.
- The program was delivered as a part of the ESL curriculum in Loyola School of Adult and Continuing Education. 60 ESL students in the program. 21 students consented to participate in the research.

The ACHIEVE Program



*Content for ACHIEVE session manuals was validated both before and after delivery of the ACHIEVE program by various immigrant stakeholders such as ESL teachers, settlement officers, immigrants, and researchers.

Study Measures and Participants

1. **Health Education Impact Questionnaire (heiQ)** [5] by Osborne et al. 2007 to **measure participants' perceived efficacy of the program.**
2. **Confidence in Health Access** developed by the research team to **measure weekly learning.**

Participants: 9 female, 12 male

Study Outcomes

- A paired samples t-test examined if there was a difference in perceived efficacy of health navigation before and after the 7-week long ACHIEVE program.
- The test demonstrated that post-test scores ($M=16.75$) were significantly higher than pre-test scores ($M=13.75$), $t(7) = -3.64$, $p < 0.01$, **indicating an increase in perceived healthcare navigation post ACHIEVE.**
- **Most sessions had significantly higher knowledge scores post-sessions indicative of participant learning in ACHIEVE.** Sessions that did not have significantly higher post-test scores were session 1 and session 3.

Conclusion

- Findings suggest the ACHIEVE program is **effective in increasing immigrants' health literacy and confidence in accessing healthcare services.**

References

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- [6] Saechao, F., Sharrock, S., Reicherter, D., Livingston, J. D., Aylward, A., Whisnant, J., ... & Kohli, S. (2012). Stressors and barriers to using mental health services among diverse groups of first-generation immigrants to the United States. *Community mental health journal, 48*(1), 98-106.
- [4] Osborne, R. H., Elsworth, G. R., & Whitfield, K. (2007). The Health Education Impact Questionnaire (heiQ): an outcomes and evaluation measure for patient education and self-management interventions for people with chronic conditions. *Patient education and counseling, 66*(2), 192-201.

If you are interested in the program and would like it to be delivered in your organization, please contact us by email: setareh.ghahari@queensu.ca