

Evaluation of Health Literacy Levels Among Bingham University Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: Health literacy is a critical determinant of health outcomes, especially among young adults navigating complex health information ecosystems. University students, despite their educational exposure, often face challenges in comprehending and applying health information effectively.

Objectives: This study aimed to assess the health literacy levels of undergraduate students at Bingham University and to explore associated sociodemographic factors, information sources, and perceived barriers to health comprehension and maintenance.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted among 428 undergraduate students selected using a multi-stage random sampling technique to ensure proportional representation. Data were collected via a structured, self-administered questionnaire measuring functional, communicative, and critical health literacy, along with demographic data, information sources, confidence levels, and perceived barriers. Descriptive and inferential statistics were analyzed using SPSS version 27.

Results: Findings revealed that 54.7% of students had low health literacy. The internet, social media, and healthcare professionals were the most common sources of health information. Although 48.6% reported high confidence in understanding health information, 77.8% experienced occasional or frequent comprehension difficulties. Most students (91.1%) recognized the importance of mental health, and 65.7% had participated in health education programs. Financial constraints (39.7%) and busy schedules (22.7%) were primary barriers to maintaining health. Gender was the only sociodemographic variable significantly associated with health literacy ($p = 0.024$), with female students demonstrating higher literacy levels.

Conclusion: Despite broad exposure to health information, a significant proportion of students at Bingham University exhibited low health literacy and reported difficulty understanding health content. Embedding health literacy education into university curricula, promoting access to credible information sources, and implementing gender-sensitive interventions are recommended to address these gaps and enhance students' health outcomes.

Keywords: Health Literacy, University Students, Information Sources, Gender Differences, Health Education, Nigeria

