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«Machtfaktor Patient 3.0» – Patienten verändern das Gesicht des Gesundheitswesens

"The power of patients 3.0" – Patients are changing the face of health care

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Health literacy and non-communicable disease (NCD): Research, practice and policy perspectives

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Teaser: Health literacy has the potential to increase our understanding of non-communicable diseases and to enhance the effectiveness of patient and public empowerment through research, practice and policy initiatives.

Background, objective: According to recent WHO estimates, NCDs account for over 60% of global deaths and are the main contributor to the global burden of disease to individuals, families, and communities. The high costs associated with the treatment of NCDs place increasing demands on health and welfare systems as well as on the global economy, through decreasing work productivity and resulting in less resources for families. This leads to poorer health outcomes and higher healthcare costs. The majority of NCDs are caused and can be treated by addressing multiple modifiable health behavioral physical inactivity, poor diet and eating habits, smoking and alcohol abuse. Health literacy is a determinant of the uptake of these health behaviors and, importantly, health literacy influences self-care competency and the ability of a person to access and use health services.

Approach, methods, patient engagement: The objective of this workshop is to explore and discuss the role and contribution of health literacy in dealing with NCDs and chronic illnesses from a variety of vantage points. Experts active in health literacy research, practice and policy will present these different perspectives as a basis for discussion and debate with the workshop participants. Specifically, the presentations will focus on

- The contribution of health literacy to the global burden of disease
- Measuring health literacy with regard to NCDs
- The impact of health literacy on the effectiveness of diabetes self-management education
- The concept of Health Literate Organizations and their role in preventing and managing NCDs
- Capacity building for health literacy and NCD prevention, early detection and self-care

Discussion and implications: The workshop will specifically discuss the following questions with the audience:

- Do the participants see the possibility to measure health literacy with regard to NCDs?
- Do they recognize the role of health literacy in self-management education of patients? Can they give additional examples?
- Do the participants consider the concept of Health Literate Organizations as useful? Do they see it as applicable to deal with NCD patients with low literacy in their health systems and organizations?
- What are the capacities of health providers that need to be strengthened to address low health literacy?

Key terms: Non-communicable disease, health literacy