

# Is it LANGUAGE or HEALTH LITERACY?

## Unpacking Barriers to Refugee Health

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1

Refugee Community in Clarkston, GA

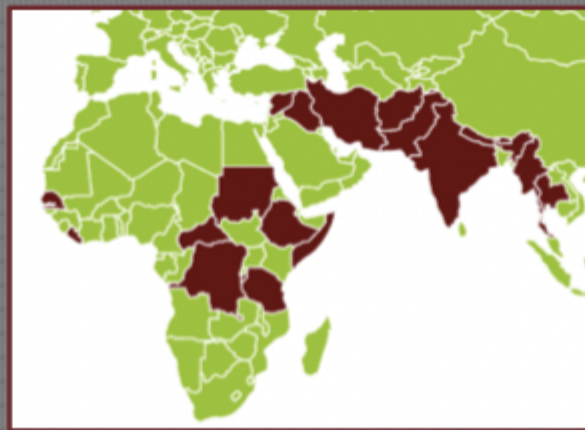
2

Social Determinants of Health Study

3

English Proficiency and Health Literacy





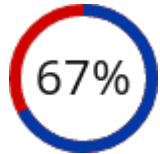
# PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

65% female



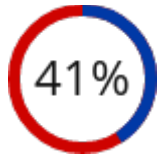
Age 18-65, mean 39.2

62.5% married



In the US less than 3 years

8.5 years average education in home country

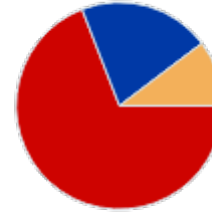


Employed



\$15,476 average family income

Region of Origin



Africa 69.1%

Asia 20.6%

Other 10.3%



# Health and Literacy Characteristics



Poor/Fair Health



No Health Insurance



Limited English Proficiency: How well do you read/write/speak English?



Low Health Literacy: Brief Health Literacy Screener



# Research Questions

1

What is the relationship between health status, English proficiency, health literacy and length of time in the US, controlling for age and gender?

2

What are the differences in poor health status by limited English proficiency and low health literacy individually and in combination?



# Findings

1

Correlation of literacy variables, health status, and length of time in US

Health Literacy and English proficiency - highly correlated at .77,  $p < .05$

Health Status - moderately correlated with health literacy (.40,  $p < .05$ ) and English proficiency (.37,  $p < .05$ )

Length of Time in US - moderately correlated with English proficiency (.38,  $p < .05$ )



# Findings

2

Poor health status as a function of literacy variables - is it language or health literacy?

Low Health Literacy: Odds Ratio 4.0 (not significant)

Limited English Proficiency: Odds Ratio 3.6 (not significant)

Interaction between low health literacy and limited English proficiency: Odds Ratio 5.1,  $p < .05$



# Why does this matter?

- Refugees are not well studied
- Healthy Immigrant Effect
- Higher English proficiency correlates with higher health literacy
- Refugees are a particularly vulnerable group with a high prevalence of poor physical and mental health
- Responsibility of healthcare providers and educators
- Resettlement and integration practices and policies



Questions?

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