

# Health Literacy of Diabetics at a Free Community Health Clinic

Fay Patsy T. Catacutan, BS, Laura E. Strietelmeier, MDiv, BS, M. Eileen Walsh, PhD, APN, RN-BC, FAHA  
The University of Toledo, College of Nursing

## Health Literacy

- “The degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions.” (IOM, 2004)
- Inadequate health literacy
  - more common among older adults, ethnic minorities, low level income and education status, and people with compromised health status including diabetes (AMA, 1999; Parker, 2000).
  - significantly associated with increased unintentional medication nonadherence (Fan et al., 2016).
- Only 12% of U.S. adults have proficient health literacy (Kutner et al., 2006).
- Approximately 77 million people have difficulty with common health tasks such as following directions on a prescription and adhering to an immunization schedule (Kutner et al., 2006).

## Diabetes

- More than 422 million people diagnosed with diabetes worldwide (World Health Statistics, 2014).
- 7th leading cause of death (Kochanek et al., 2016).
- Self-care is an essential component to managing diabetes.
- Lucas County, Ohio
  - 15% adults are diagnosed with diabetes.
  - 24% of adults are > 65 years.

## Community Care Clinic

- Interprofessional, student-run organization.
- Provide patient care under faculty supervision.
- Free of cost to all without health insurance.

## Purpose

- To assess health literacy of individuals with diabetes who attend a free community health clinic.

## Conceptual Framework

- Orem’s Self-Care Deficit Theory.

## Methods

- Convenience sample.
- Individuals 18 years and older.
- Self-identify with a diagnosis of diabetes.
- Completed demographic, diabetic self-care and health literacy surveys.

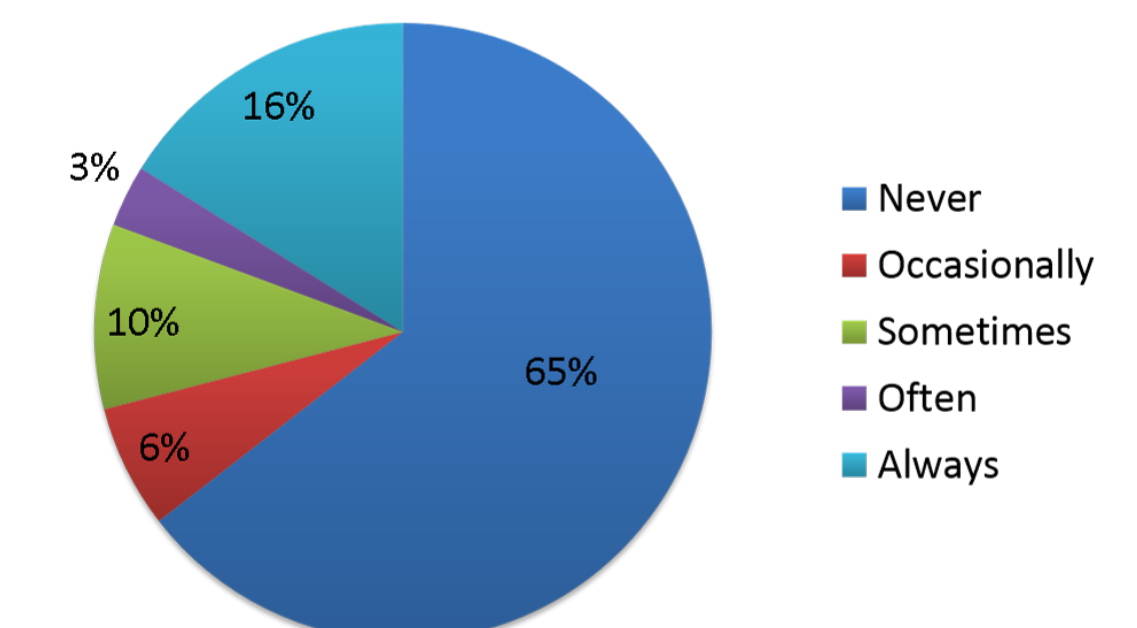
## 3-Level Health Literacy Scale

- 3 questions are effective for screening inadequate health literacy (Chew et al., 2004).
- Short tools allow clinical staff to assess health literacy rapidly and unobtrusively (Chew et al., 2004).

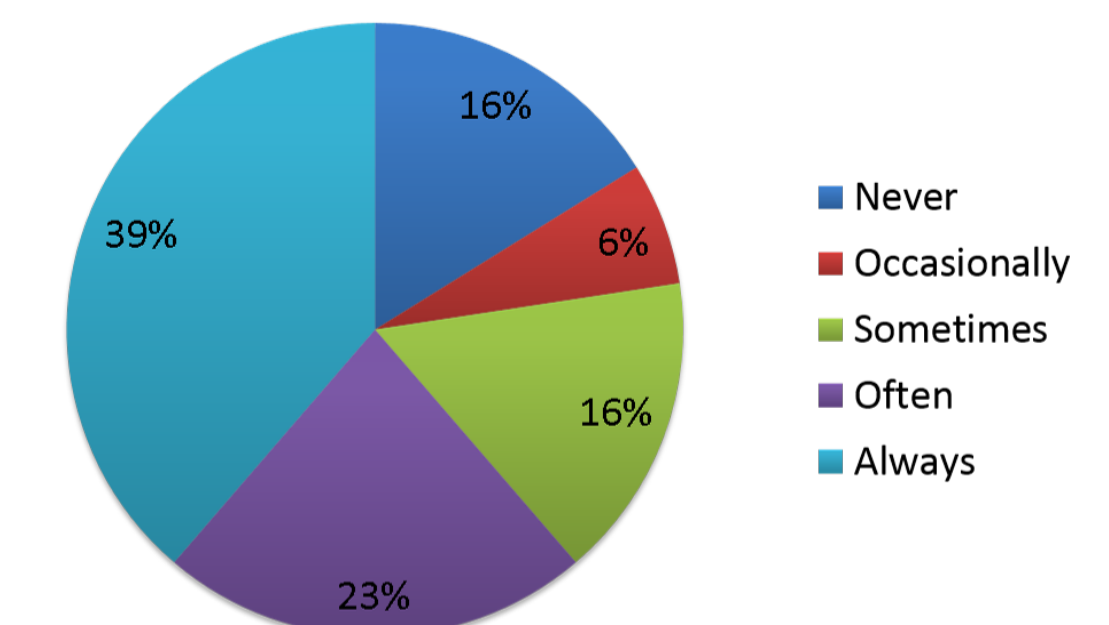
## Demographics

- 31 Participants age 27 to 84 years (54)
  - Female: 21 (67.7%) Male: 10 (32.2%)
  - Type I: 1 (3.2%) Type II: 30 (96.8%)
- Race
  - White: 22 (70.9%) Latino/Hispanic: 5 (26.1%)
  - Black or African American: 4 (12.9%)
- Education
  - < 8th grade: 4 (12.9%)
  - High School/GED: 9 (29.0%)
  - > High School: 18 (58.1%)
- Employment
  - Working: 9 (29.0%) Retired: 4 (12.9%)
  - Unemployed/Disabled: 18 (58.1%)

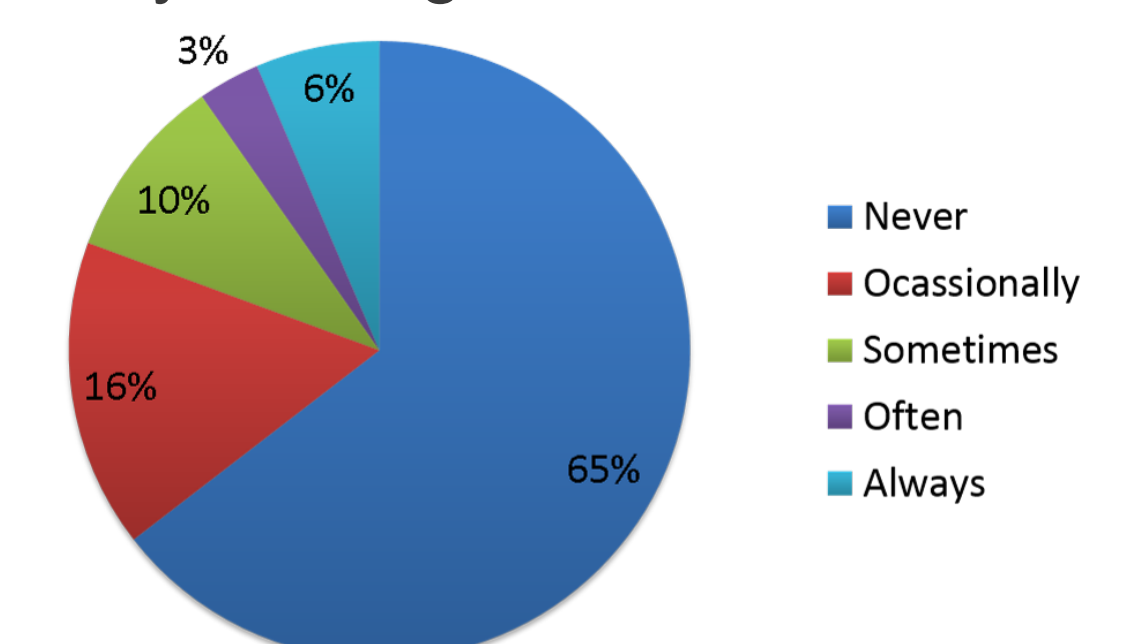
## Results



1. How often does someone help you read hospital materials?



2. How confident are you filling out medical forms by yourself?



3. How Often do you have problems learning about your medical condition because of difficulty understanding the written information?

## Conclusion

- 35% need help reading hospital materials.
- 61% are not confident filling out medical forms independently.
- 35% have problems understanding written information.
- Health literacy levels should be considered when providing self-care education to diabetics.
- Written information should be appropriate to the health literacy level.