

Regarding the process of care, 78.9% takes care of one person, 85.2% have been caring for more than 1 year, 54.3% feel that are not supported at all, and 20.3% do not feel competent to care. The mean HL score ($n = 673$) was 31.9 (+7.8), and 58.6% has a problematic or inadequate HL level. Education ($p < 0.001$), marital status ($p = 0.030$), employment ($p < 0.001$), family income ($p < 0.001$), perception of general and mental health status ($p < 0.001$), level of support ($p < 0.001$), level of perceived competence ($p < 0.001$), access to health care ($p < 0.001$) and access to information ($p < 0.001$) were associated with the informal caregivers' HL Score.

Conclusions:

Socioeconomic determinants are associated with HL Score, better socioeconomic status is associated with a higher level of health literacy among informal caregivers. Future studies focused on these determinants are needed to better understand and act on them.

Key messages:

- Health literacy levels are associated to socioeconomic determinants, better socioeconomic status is associated with a higher level of health literacy among informal caregivers.
- Higher levels of health literacy are associated with higher levels of perceived competence to provide care.

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Health literacy of informal caregivers: findings from a Portuguese study

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Background:

Health literacy (HL) concerns the knowledge and competences of people to meet the complex demands of process of caring. Providing health care to someone can be an extremely demanding task that requires a combination of skills and knowledge. HL can be considered a key factor in promoting the health of both the informal caregiver and the cared person. The aim of this study was to assess the characteristics associated with health literacy among informal caregivers.

Methods:

A cross-sectional study was conducted through an online survey directed to informal caregivers. It was applied the Portuguese version of European Health Literacy Survey (HLS-EU-PT-Q16) and it was calculated a 0-50 Score. Bivariate analyses were performed using one-way ANOVA, independent T-tests, and Pearson's correlation, at a 5% significance level in SPSS®.

Results:

In total, 760 informal caregivers were surveyed, mean age 57 years (± 9.9), 92.5% female, 62.6% married or living with a partner, 41.5% higher education, 44.4% works full or part-time, 58.7% receives up to two national minimum wages.