**THE INFLUENCE OF HEALTH LITERACY ON THE OUTCOMES OF CHRONIC DISEASES**

**ABSTRACT**

Health literacy implies the ability to understand and use information properly to improve one's health. The links between health literacy and health status are well known and described. Practice unequivocally indicates the synchronicity of the level of health literacy, adherence, health outcomes and health in general. People with poor health literacy feel deep-rooted shame and fear, and this puts them in a position of increased health risk. Croatia has a long tradition of public health based on the work of Dr Andrija Štampar. Today we do not have accurate data on the level of health literacy. However, according to the health status of the nation and research conducted in neighbouring countries, we can conclude that it is not satisfactory (global literacy level is about 50% globally) and that it is taking on the crisis. Therefore, activities and initiatives to educate the population on topics from the health segment are necessary. However, it is equally important to make health care providers aware, so that, aware of the scale of the problem, they can adapt their communication style and approach to people with a basic level of knowledge in health literacy. The World Health Organization emphasizes that the value of such initiatives is in empowering communities and improving the lives of individuals because lack of health leads to slowing economic and social development, deterioration of existing potentials and depletion of resources in all parts of society.

**Keywords:** health literacy, interpersonal communication, adherence