

TESTING THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE LEVEL OF SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE: A RANDOMIZED EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

Communication of correct and understandable scientific research data is an important factor in health behavior-related decision-making. In this process, the central concept is health literacy, an ability of an individual to understand presented information about health content. Despite health literacy being assessed in various contexts, there is still no research that would assess how an understanding of basic methodological concepts is related to decision-making about the effectiveness of the therapy. This study aims to examine if there is a difference in the assessment of the effectiveness of the treatment if the findings are the result of different combinations of sample size and study type. Study participants were dental practice patients, who were given scenarios with a description of research with different combinations of sample size and study type, in random order. Readers did not distinguish study methods to the possibility of proving therapy effectiveness. On top of that, it was found that the readers did not differ in effectiveness assessment depending on the sample size of the described research. Finally, independently of the study type, the study participants were given, they all felt equally confident to assess the effectiveness of the therapy. These findings are important in information translation from scientific research through media in everyday communication. When communicating research findings, one should clearly emphasize if it is possible to prove therapy effectiveness with a specific research type.

Keywords: scientific communication; evidence translation; health literacy.