

Health literacy and quality of life in patients with cardiovascular diseases: a cross-sectional study

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Introduction: Health literacy is a critical factor in the management of cardiovascular diseases and has a direct impacts patients' quality of life. Understanding the relationship between health literacy and quality of life can help identify patient groups at risk and guide targeted interventions.¹⁻⁴ This study aimed to assess health literacy and quality of life in patients with cardiovascular diseases, and to explore their association, while considering differences in gender, age, education, marital status, and place of residence.

Patients and Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted at the Department of Cardiology, General Hospital "Dr. Josip Benčević," between March and May 2025. Hospitalized patients with cardiovascular diseases were included. Data were collected using an anonymous written questionnaire including sociodemographic questions, the SAHLSA-50 test for health literacy, and the SF-36 questionnaire for quality of life. Due to non-normal data distribution, nonparametric tests (Mann-Whitney, Kruskal-Wallis with post hoc analysis) were applied. Significance was set at $P < 0.05$. Analyses were performed using JASP version 0.19.3.

Results: Participants showed moderate health literacy, with no significant differences across most demographic groups. Mental health scored highest, whereas physical functioning exhibited the greatest limitations. Higher health literacy was correlated with better overall quality of life and fewer emotional limitations. Significant differences in literacy and quality of life were observed with respect to age, education, and place of residence. Men reported better physical functioning, while women experienced greater emotional limitations. Older participants reported more intense pain.

Conclusion: Health literacy among patients with cardiovascular diseases is generally moderate and positively influences quality of life, particularly in mental health and physical functioning. Demographic factors including age, education, gender, and place of residence significantly affect both health literacy and quality of life. These findings highlight the importance of tailored interventions to improve patient outcomes in cardiovascular care.

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