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Gesundheitsfördernder  
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Deutsches Netz  
Rauchfreier  
Krankenhäuser &  
Gesundheitseinrichtungen

## Call for Abstracts – Kurzdarstellung eines Beitrages für die 13. Konferenz für Gesundheitsförderung im Krankenhaus und das Forum Rauchfreier Krankenhäuser & Gesundheitseinrichtungen

**Abgabeschluss:**

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### Titel des Beitrages:

**The Newest Vital Sign –  
a reliable test to evaluate Health Literacy?**

A comparative study about test results gained in an ambulatory setting in London, England, and in an inpatient setting in Hamburg, Germany.

### Kurzdarstellung:

**Issue:** Health literacy is defined as the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions. In the light of current demographic changes and due to an increasingly complex health system health literacy is becoming a crucial variable. To quickly evaluate health literacy of patients in busy health care settings the Newest Vital Sign Test (NVS) has recently been developed in the US. The NVS is designed as a nutrition label of an ice cream container that is accompanied by 6 questions and is expected to require 3 minutes for administration. **Description of the problem:** Currently, a testing device to assess health literacy is not available in German health care facilities. The present comparative study evaluated the original NVS in an ambulatory setting (GP clinic) in London, England, and after translation into German, in an inpatient setting in Hamburg, Germany. **Results:** Inadequate health literacy was highly prevalent in both settings (ambulatory: 76% vs. inpatients: 90%), and positively correlated to age and the needed testing time. The six provided questions proofed to have a different level of difficulty, offering the option to even more abbreviate the test by using two of the questions as indicator questions. While valid test results were gained through tests of patients admitted to a ward of the renal department, patients tested in the emergency department and on the intermediated care unit scored considerably worse, leaving in doubt the validity of this test in these settings. **Lessons:** Inadequate Health literacy is a widespread phenomenon in western societies which, in Germany, is certain to gain momentum in the light of both the imminent demographic change, the rise of immigrating non-native speakers and the accessibility of medical services across the EU-borders. Studies have already highlighted that health professionals are not adequately aware of this problem, even though the effectiveness and the costs of medical treatment directly correlate with the individual degree of health literacy of the treated patient. A screening for inadequate health literacy in Germany seems to be pivotal to increase both efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system. The development and introduction of testing devices could be a mayor step towards achieving this goal. For this purpose, the lessons learnt from using the NVS appear invaluable.