

Health Literacy Policy for Culturally Appropriate Health Systems

Workshop: Health literacy in Policies - European and National Perspectives

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Prof. Diane Levin-Zamir, PhD, MPH, MCHES

Director, National Department of Health Promotion

Clalit Health Services, Israel

University of Haifa, School of Public Health, Israel

Chair – National Council on Health Promotion, Israel Ministry of Health

IUHPE –Global Working Group Health Literacy * IHLA Executive Board



IUHPE

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND EDUCATION



IHLA

International Health Literacy Association



University of Haifa

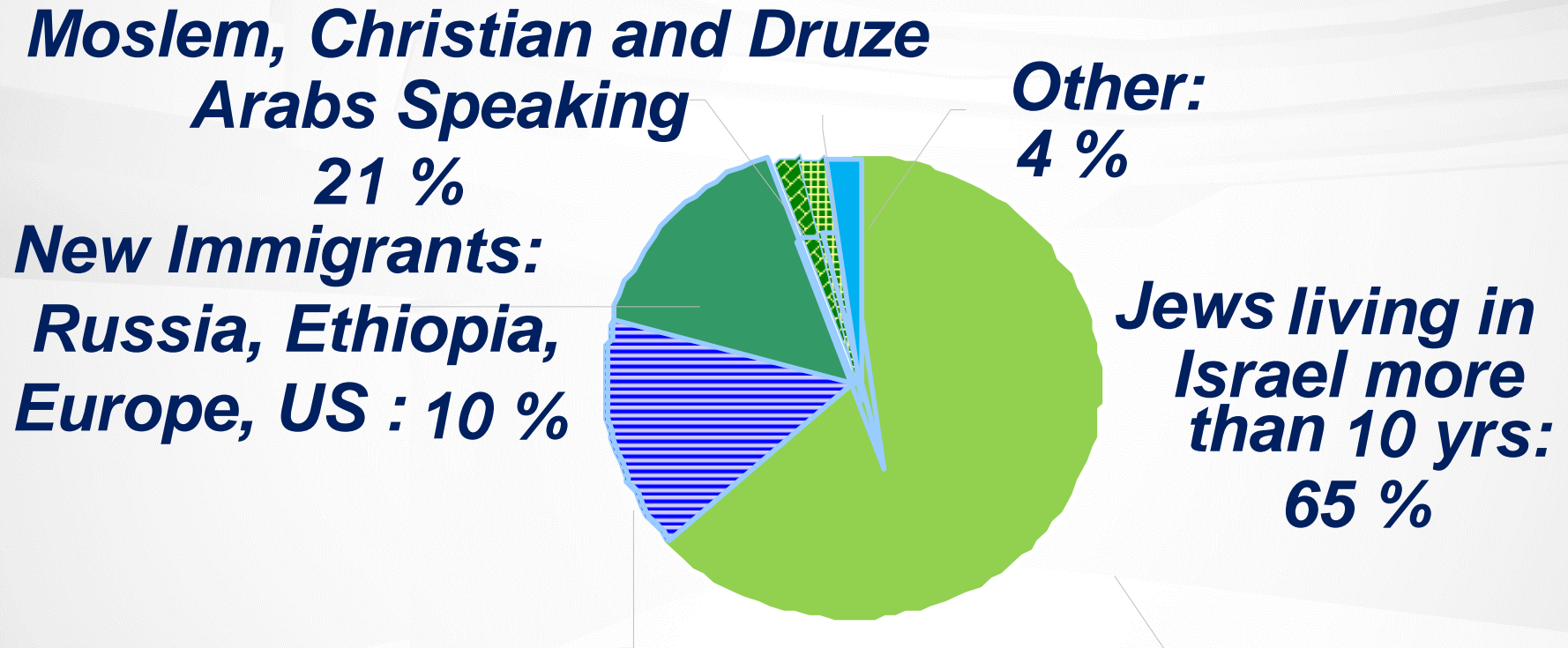


Why policy for culturally appropriate health systems?

- Culture influences health behavior including use of healthcare systems.
- For equity, health information needs to be accessible and understandable → culturally and language appropriate.
- Migration and Immigration often lead to culture change from traditional to Western.
- Policies need to address the above including resource allocation.



Israel - A Country of Diverse Cultures



Cultural Competence:

“The capacity to function effectively as an individual and as an organization within the context of cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by consumers and their communities.”

Policy for Cultural Appropriateness – the case for Israel

Israel Ministry of Health Directive (2011) requiring the **entire health system to be culturally accessible:**

- Training of staff re communication skills
- Simultaneous translation during care (telephone, in-person)
- Culturally adapted educational materials and tools
- Public participation including religious/ethnic leaders
- Research and monitoring
- Appointing institutional coordinators

“Refuah shlema”

cross-cultural mediators for health of Ethiopian immigrants

- 30 **Cross-cultural liaisons** in primary care clinics (1999 – 2020+)
- Initiate and support **community health promotion** initiatives
- Support **navigation** of the healthcare system
- Promote **capacity building** and **cultural competency skills** of primary healthcare staff.
- Build long term **trust** with the community is essential when dealing with crises such as testing and tracking during COVID-19.



Digital Innovative Intervention for Immigrants

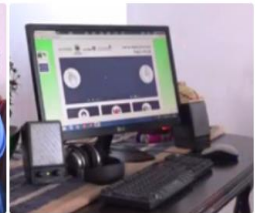
- Instructional videos
- Supporting digital health literacy skills for internet
- Videos specifically instructing on how to use smartphones for accessing health information



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שימוש באוזניות



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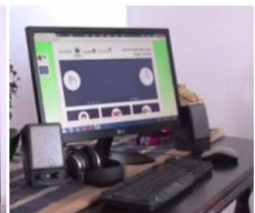
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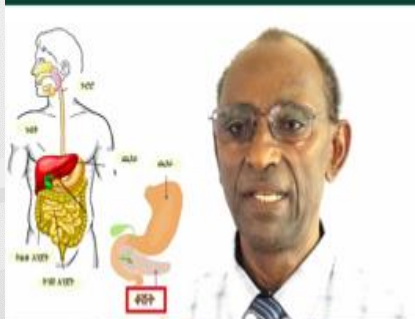
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שימוש במחשב



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שימוש באתר

הגדרת מחלת הסוכרת וסוגיה

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מה אפשר להכין בבית במקום

מזון? דג, בשר, ירקות, פירות, חלב, מים, ...



Health literacy, culture and COVID-19

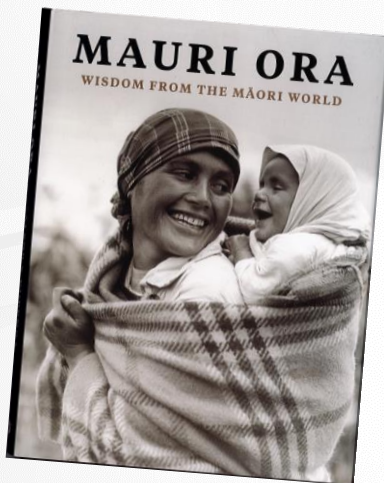
- Producing culturally appropriate information on Covid-19 prevention, testing and care: Hebrew, Arabic, Russian and adapted to the ultra-religious Jewish community
- Health promoting holidays – Passover, Ramadan, Easter during lockdown
- Identifying community lay leaders especially during outbreaks
- Collaborating with multi-lingual mass media



Conclusions

Cultural appropriateness:

- is an essential part of health literacy
- can be promoted through digital and innovative resources responsiveness
- must be part of national health policies including emergency contingency plans.



“The active soul is a healthy soul”

“My strength is not as an individual but as a collective”

Resources

Levin-Zamir, D., Keret, S., Yaakovson, O., Lev, B., Kay, C., Verber, G., & Lieberman, N. (2011) A cross-cultural programme for promoting communication and health among Ethiopian immigrants in the primary health care setting in Israel Special Edition on Health Promotion Effectiveness, *Global Health Promotion*;18(1): 51-54.

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Levin-Zamir, D., Badarne, S., Najami, M., Gan Noy, S., Poraz, I., Shapira, M., Lieberman, N., & Goldfracht, M. (2015) The use of focus groups as a basis for planning and implementing culturally appropriate health promotion among diabetics from the Arab community. *Global Health Promotion*, March 23, 2015, doi: 10.1177/1757975914548200.

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Levin-Zamir, D., Bertschi, I. (2018) Media health literacy, eHealth literacy, and the role of the social environment in context. *International Journal for Environmental Research for Public Health* 15(8), 1643.

Thank you!

dianele@clalit.org.il
diamos@zahav.net.il

