



Emergency services and health literacy

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Dear Editor,

According to the current definition of the world health organization health literacy is the desire and capacity of people to form opinions and make decisions about health services throughout their lives, to access health-related information resources in order to protect, maintain, improve and improve their health, and to perceive health-related information and messages correctly (1).

The emergence of the health literacy has been with the increase in the frequency of chronic and degenerative diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic lung diseases, diabetes, while infectious diseases have lost their importance as the leading causes of death since the middle of the last century (2). In this case, it came to the fore that those who provide health services should develop services for these diseases (2, 3). However, the control of chronic and degenerative diseases is not as easy as the control of infectious diseases. While communicable diseases can be controlled by measures such as vaccination, timely and appropriate antibiotic treatment, and providing healthy drinking and potable water, different methods are required for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. Because, unlike communicable diseases, various factors have a role in the formation of non-communicable diseases (4). The factors that affect chronic diseases are the changes that occur in the organism due to advancing age, as well as genetic factors have a role in some diseases. Therefore, interventions for the control of non-communicable diseases must be multifaceted (4). Some of these factors require the improvement of the environment and services, while others require people to make changes in their health-related behaviors. In the formation of chronic and degenerative diseases, the health-related behaviors of people are of great importance (4). Failure to comply with the principles of healthy living, which can be summarized as healthy nutrition, active life and not smoking, poses a risk for the development of various chronic diseases (1). As the

pandemic period reveals, people's behavior is important in the spread of infectious diseases. These behaviors can have consequences that affect not only the individual's own health, but also the public health, even the economy and social life (5).

The main thing in emergency service is to give this service to the most urgent as soon as possible. Application of non-emergency patients increases the emergency room crowd (6). Approximately 30% of the total hospital admissions in our country are emergency services (1). Although the crowdedness of the patients in the emergency services is relatively less in the hospital where the research was conducted in our country, this situation always emerges as a national and local health problem. It is known that this problem has both sociological (emergency concept perception in patients) and administrative and physical inadequacy reasons. In addition, non-urgent emergency applications exacerbate this problem. The tendency of those who applied to the emergency service to think about their own situation as an emergency, to use the emergency room as an outpatient clinic because all examinations can be done in the same day in the emergency services and fast results can be obtained, has been shown in the studies conducted on this subject (6). On the other hand, it is a separate public health problem that patients try to solve their chronic diseases in the emergency department due to the ease of access (7). These patients cannot be followed up regularly and cannot reach quality health care. For health problems that require further examination, such as rectal bleeding, repeated admissions to the emergency room instead of the relevant health unit cause a delay in the diagnosis. These delayed diagnoses can cause mortality and morbidity from time to time (1, 3).

Misuse and abuse of emergency services is a common problem in our country. As authors, we think that the increase in the level of health literacy may prevent this misuse and abuse.

Conflict of interest

None to declare.

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