

## The European Health Literacy Survey 2019 of M-POHL: a summary of its main results

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### Background:

The HLS-EU study in 2011 demonstrated that there exists limited comprehensive health literacy (HL) for considerable proportions of the general population, that there is a social gradient for HL and that limited HL has problematic consequences for healthy lifestyles, self-reported health and utilization of health care services. But distributions and associations of HL differed considerably between the 8 included EU-countries. WHO-Europe initiated the Acton Network on Measuring Population and Organizational Health Literacy (M-POHL) to measure HL regularly, starting with the Health Literacy Survey 2019 (HLS19).

### Methods:

Based on the design and instrument of the HLS-EU, an improved core questionnaire was developed for HLS19 to measure comprehensive HL and its relevant correlates. Optional packages introduced specific instruments and measured digital, communication, navigation and vaccination

HL and its most relevant correlates. Cross-sectional data were collected by probability samples of at least 1.000 respondents per country for the general population 18+, in 17 member states of the WHO-Europe region, by personal interviews, telephone interviews, or internet surveys.

**Results:**

Considerable proportions of resident adult populations in participating countries have limited HL and there is a social gradient for HL. HL also has, but to a differing degree, consequences for selected life-style indicators, indicators for self-reported health and use of professional health care services. General trends were found, but also considerable variation by country.

**Conclusions:**

Results demonstrated that main trends of the HLS-EU study concerning HL hold still true for HLS19 and that there are even more pronounced differences between participating countries. Since HL is relevant for health policy in all countries, policy recommendations for improving HL in the European region were drafted by the HLS19 consortium and will be presented in the second presentation.