HEALTH LITERACY

WHY AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IS NECESSARY

We have experienced a global historical movement towards increasing patient autonomy in treatment and healthcare. Autonomy requires either high patient knowledge or a high ability to acquire it. This has come to be discussed under the label of health literacy. Academic disciplines highlight different aspects of the concept: social science focuses on its measurement and the ability and outcomes of information seeking, linguistics and humanities on the definition of (ill)literacy, and medical science on the soundness of medical judgment. Only when these perspectives are all taken into account can we fully grasp the import of the concept.