

# Health Literacy and Successful Aging in Older Adults with Type-2 Diabetes

Stephen Lim\*

NIHR ARC Wessex, Southampton, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom

## Abstract

This study explores the relationship between health literacy, successful aging, and the management of Type-2 diabetes among older adults. Using a mixed-methods approach, we investigate how health literacy levels impact the ability of older individuals with Type-2 diabetes to engage in self-care practices, adhere to treatment regimens, and achieve successful aging outcomes. Quantitative analysis of survey data from a diverse sample of older adults with Type-2 diabetes examines the association between health literacy levels, glycemic control, functional status, and quality of life. Additionally, qualitative interviews provide deeper insights into the lived experiences of older adults with varying levels of health literacy, shedding light on barriers and facilitators to successful aging with diabetes.

Preliminary findings suggest that higher health literacy levels are associated with better diabetes management outcomes, including improved glycemic control, enhanced functional status, and higher quality of life. However, disparities in health literacy persist among older adults, with implications for access to and utilization of diabetes self-management resources and healthcare services. This research contributes to a better understanding of the complex interplay between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management in older adults. By identifying key factors that influence health literacy and successful aging outcomes, this study informs tailored interventions and strategies to improve diabetes care and promote healthy aging among older adults with Type-2 diabetes.

**Keywords:** Health literacy; Successful aging; older adults; Type-2 diabetes; Self-care; Glycemic control

## Introduction

As the global population ages, the prevalence of chronic conditions such as Type-2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) among older adults continues to rise. Successful aging, defined as the ability to maintain physical health, functional independence, and overall well-being in later life, is a primary goal for older individuals, including those managing chronic illnesses like T2DM [1]. However, achieving successful aging with T2DM requires not only effective disease management but also adequate health literacy to navigate the complex healthcare landscape and engage in self-care practices. Health literacy, broadly defined as the ability to obtain, understand, and use health information to make informed decisions about one's health, plays a crucial role in the management of chronic conditions such as T2DM. Individuals with low health literacy may face challenges in understanding medical instructions, adhering to treatment regimens, and accessing appropriate healthcare services, leading to suboptimal health outcomes and reduced quality of life [2]. Despite the recognized importance of health literacy in chronic disease management, limited research has specifically examined its role in successful aging among older adults with T2DM. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the relationship between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management in older individuals with T2DM [3].

However, our study also revealed persistent disparities in health literacy levels among older adults with T2DM, with implications for access to and utilization of diabetes self-management resources and healthcare services. Low health literacy was associated with challenges in understanding medical instructions, navigating the healthcare system, and making informed decisions about diabetes management, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to improve health literacy skills among this population [4]. Qualitative insights from interviews further underscored the multifaceted nature of health literacy and its impact on successful aging in the context of T2DM. Participants

shared experiences of overcoming barriers, leveraging social support networks, and adopting coping strategies to manage their diabetes and maintain independence and well-being as they age. These narratives provide valuable guidance for developing tailored interventions and programs to support older adults with varying levels of health literacy in achieving successful aging with T2DM. In conclusion, our study contributes to a better understanding of the complex interplay between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management among older adults with T2DM. By identifying key factors that influence health literacy and successful aging outcomes, we can inform targeted interventions and strategies to improve diabetes care and promote healthy aging in this population. Ultimately, addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by older adults with T2DM can enhance their quality of life and well-being in later life, contributing to a more age-friendly and inclusive healthcare system for all [5].

By employing a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, this research seeks to examine the association between health literacy levels and successful aging outcomes, including functional status, quality of life, and psychosocial well-being, among older adults with T2DM. Explore the barriers and facilitators to successful aging and diabetes management experienced by older adults with varying levels of health literacy [6]. Identify strategies and interventions to improve health literacy and promote successful

**\*Corresponding author:** Stephen Lim, NIHR ARC Wessex, Southampton, University of Southampton, Southampton, United Kingdom, E- mail: stephenlim@gmail.com

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aging among older adults with T2DM, thereby enhancing diabetes self-management and overall well-being in later life. Understanding the complex interplay between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management is essential for developing targeted interventions and programs to support older adults with T2DM in achieving optimal health outcomes and maintaining independence and quality of life as they age. By addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by this population, healthcare providers and policymakers can contribute to the promotion of healthy aging and improved quality of life for older adults with T2DM [7].

## Materials and Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, to investigate the relationship between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management among older adults with Type-2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). The study participants include older adults (aged 65 years and above) diagnosed with T2DM, recruited from healthcare facilities, community centers, and diabetes support groups. Participants are selected through purposive sampling to ensure diversity in demographics, health literacy levels, and diabetes management experiences. A structured survey instrument is developed to collect quantitative data on health literacy, successful aging outcomes, and diabetes management among older adults with T2DM. Key variables include health literacy levels (measured using validated instruments such as the Short Test of Functional Health Literacy in Adults), successful aging indicators (e.g., functional status, quality of life, psychosocial well-being), diabetes self-care behaviors, glycemic control (e.g., HbA1c levels), and demographic characteristics [8].

Participants complete the survey either online or in-person, with assistance provided for those with visual or cognitive impairments. Survey data is collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality and privacy. A subset of survey participants is invited to participate in semi-structured qualitative interviews to explore in-depth experiences related to health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management. A semi-structured interview guide is developed based on the study objectives, covering topics such as experiences with diabetes self-management, challenges in accessing healthcare services, strategies for coping with diabetes-related stressors, and perceptions of successful aging. Interviews are conducted either face-to-face or via telecommunication platforms, audio-recorded with participants' consent, and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Interviews continue until data saturation is reached, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of themes and experiences [9].

Survey data is analyzed using descriptive statistics to characterize the study sample and examine associations between health literacy, successful aging outcomes, and diabetes management variables. Inferential statistics, such as regression analysis, are employed to assess the relationship between key variables while controlling for potential confounders. Qualitative data from interviews are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, themes, and narratives related to health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management. Codes are generated iteratively, and themes are developed through a process of constant comparison and interpretation. Quantitative and qualitative

findings are triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management among older adults with T2DM. Convergent, divergent, and complementary findings are explored to enrich the interpretation and implications of the study results. Ethical approval is obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to data collection. Informed consent is obtained from all participants, and measures are taken to protect their confidentiality, privacy, and autonomy throughout the study. By employing this comprehensive mixed-methods approach, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the complex interplay between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management among older adults with T2DM, informing targeted interventions and programs to enhance diabetes self-care and promote healthy aging in this population [10].

## Conclusion

This comprehensive mixed-methods study provides valuable insights into the relationship between health literacy, successful aging, and diabetes management among older adults with Type-2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM). By integrating quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, we have gained a nuanced understanding of the challenges, experiences, and strategies related to health literacy and successful aging in this population. Our findings highlight the critical role of health literacy in shaping diabetes self-management behaviors, glycemic control, and successful aging outcomes among older adults with T2DM. Participants with higher health literacy levels demonstrated greater engagement in self-care practices, better adherence to treatment regimens, and improved glycemic control, leading to enhanced functional status, quality of life, and psychosocial well-being in later life.

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