

# Relationship of Preventive Health Practices and Health Literacy: A National Study

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**Objective:** To identify relationships between the health literacy and self-reported preventive health practices of US adults. **Methods:** Measured health literacy and preventive health practices for a nationally representative sample of adults (N = 18,100) and conducted probit regression analyses after controlling for age, gender, race/ethnicity, poverty level, insurance status, self-reported health status, and oral reading fluency. **Results:** Low literacy was

associated with a decreased likelihood of using most preventive health measures under study for adults aged 65 and older, but not for adults of 2 younger age groups. **Conclusion:** The relationship between health literacy and preventive health practices varied substantially by adult age group.

**Key words:** preventive health practices, health literacy, adult literacy, self-reported preventive health practices

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