

# Health Literacy Skills in Rural and Urban Populations

Whitney E. Zahnd, MS; Steven L. Scaife, MS; Mark L. Francis, MD

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**Objective:** To determine whether health literacy is lower in rural populations. **Method:** We analyzed health, prose, document, and quantitative literacy from the National Assessment of Adult Literacy study. Metropolitan Statistical Area designated participants as rural or urban. **Results:** Rural populations had lower literacy levels for all literacy types ( $P < 0.001$  for each). After adjusting for known con-

founders, there was no longer a difference in health or prose literacy ( $P > 0.05$ ). However, rural populations had higher document ( $P = 0.04$ ) and quantitative ( $P = 0.01$ ) literacy. **Conclusion:** Health literacy is lower in the rural population although this difference is explained by known confounders.

**Key words:** health literacy, literacy, rural, urban

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