A newly developed health literacy scale for Turkish speaking literate adults
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Background:
Despite numerous health literacy scales adapted and used in Turkey, there was no scale, which was originally developed and validated at a national level. This study aimed to develop and validate a culturally appropriate health literacy scale to be used as a reference scale for the Turkish speaking, literate adult population.

Methods:
In the first phase, widely used international health literacy scales and adapted/locally developed scales in Turkey were reviewed. Thereafter, two multidisciplinary workshops with more than 20 experts were conducted and a large item pool was developed. The first draft was pre-tested with 20 adults, revised and pre-tested again in a household survey with 150 adults from different socioeconomic levels in Ankara. The validity and reliability study of the revised scale was carried out with a household survey of 2466 adults in 12 randomly selected provinces from 12 NUTS regions in Turkey. Data analysis was performed with 2411 adults after removing participants categorized as “health workers” and the scale was finalized with the most valid and reliable items. The study was supported by the HU Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit.

Results:
Study findings showed that HU-Health Literacy Scale (HU-SOY) can be used to assess health literacy of Turkish speaking, literate adults. Cronbach’s alpha for two main dimensions (“health protection and promotion” and “treatment and health services”) were 0.79 and 0.91, respectively. Indices as evidence of construction validity were; RMSEA = 0.049, GFI = 0.95, NFI = 1.00 and AGFI = 0.95. The scale includes “self-efficacy” as an additional dimension with Cronbach’s alpha = 0.83, RMSEA = 0.68, GFI = 0.94, NFI = 0.94 and AGFI = 0.91.

Conclusions:
A culturally appropriate scale for Turkish speaking adults will enable researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to have standard monitoring, evaluation, and comparison for more evidence-based health education, communication and health service provision.

Key messages:
- Health literacy scales are important tools for evidence-based health education and promotion.
- Culturally appropriate scales can provide more precise measurements for target populations.