

## Overview

Over one third (36.5%) of U.S. adults are obese, a prevalence that continues to increase nationally and globally. Obesity is associated with many chronic diseases, increased health care costs, and shorter life expectancies. Research has found that people who are able to understand health information are less likely to be obese, but there is limited research about what people know and understand about weight loss (weight literacy). The purpose of this study was to create a weight literacy assessment scale that is based upon research evidence, and that can help to understand what English-speaking and Spanish-speaking individuals know and understand about weight loss.

## Main Questions

- **Questions:** Which evidence-based questions can assess what an individual might know and understand about weight loss?
- **Reliability:** Is the Weight Literacy Scale reliable, with results that are consistent when it is taken a second time?
- **Validity:** Is the Weight Literacy Scale valid, accurately measuring what people know and understand about weight management?

## Study

There were two phases in the study. During Phase 1, the team developed an initial draft of the **Weight Literacy Scale** in English and Spanish, based on a review of the literature, expert revision, and testing with 20 English or Spanish speaking individuals. The Scale's questions were modified based on Phase 1 results.

During Phase 2, the revised Scale was tested with 200 English or Spanish speaking individuals, and its validity and internal reliability were assessed through a series of statistical tests. A subset of Phase 2 participants completed the Scale two weeks later to assess test-retest reliability. Participant recruitment and study procedures took place in community settings in central Massachusetts for both study phases. The Institutional Review Board at the UMass Medical School approved the study.

## The Bottom Line

The **Weight Literacy Scale** is a reliable and valid research instrument to assess weight literacy among English- and Spanish-speaking adults.

### Source

Wang ML, Little TV, Frisard C, Borg A, Lemon SC, Rosal MC (2018) Development and validation of a Weight Literacy Scale in English and Spanish. PLoS ONE 13(10): e0204678. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0204678>

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## Spotlight on Results

- The final **Weight Literacy Scale** has 31 questions, available in English and Spanish.
- The **Weight Literacy Scale** has psychometric properties with evidence of reliability and validity.

## Call for Action

The **Weight Literacy Scale** may be used to assess individual's knowledge and understanding of weight management for research, and to screen individuals who may need more assistance with making informed weight loss decisions. It may also be used to help identify the educational content of weight loss interventions.

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