

Deaf LGBT Adults' Health Literacy: Possible Effect of Stigma

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Introduction

- Research has shown that Deaf American Sign Language (ASL) users can encounter many challenges when trying to access health information.
- It is possible that stigma plays a role in creating barriers for this community as has been observed in the hearing LGBT community. These challenges can grow from bias, fear of discrimination, or lack of education from the health workers perspective.
- The Newest Vital Signs (NVS), a measure of health literacy, was administered to 445 hearing adults (42 self-identified as LGBT+) and 447 Deaf adults (58 self-identified as LGBT+) around Chicago, IL, Flint, MI, and Rochester, NY.
- Statistical analyses will be conducted to see if identifying as Deaf and identifying as LGBT+ has null, separate, or additive effects on health literacy.
- If Deaf LGBT+ individuals are at greater risk for inadequate health literacy, then this has important implications for this population's health education.

OBJECTIVES

- Previous studies have shown that minority groups illustrate higher rates of health disparities on multiple levels. These minority groups include individuals of different race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and more.
- The studies' objective was to find out if there are differences between groups and self-efficacy, as well as find out if fewer deaf LGBT have health care providers as compared to deaf non-LGBT/hearing LGBT.
- Administering the NVS, or the Newest Vital Sign screening tool, is a way to examine health literacy in people.
- Determining where these barriers are, provide better insight on how to improve these scenarios to then improve health literacy intervention.

Example of NVS in ASL Display

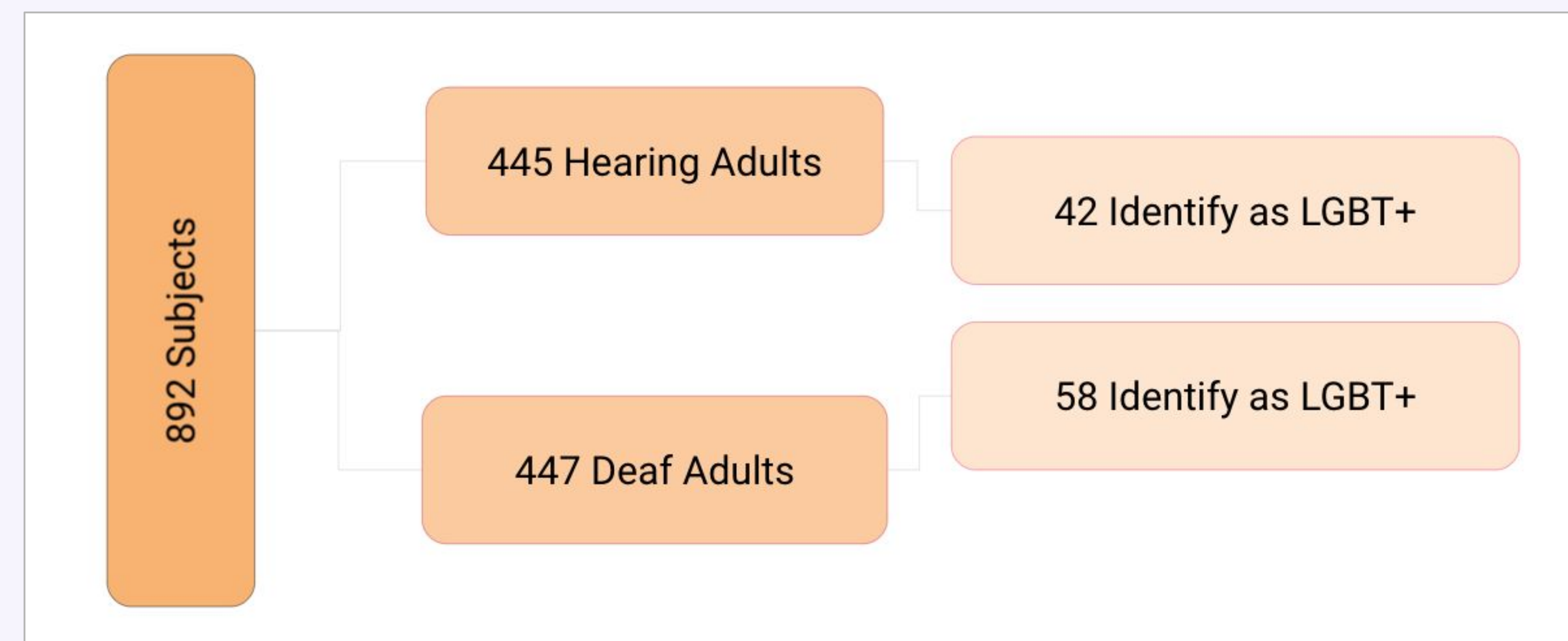
Contains six questions about nutrition labels

(Weiss et al., 2005)

- 0–3 correct answers = **less than adequate**
- 4–6 correct answers = **adequate**

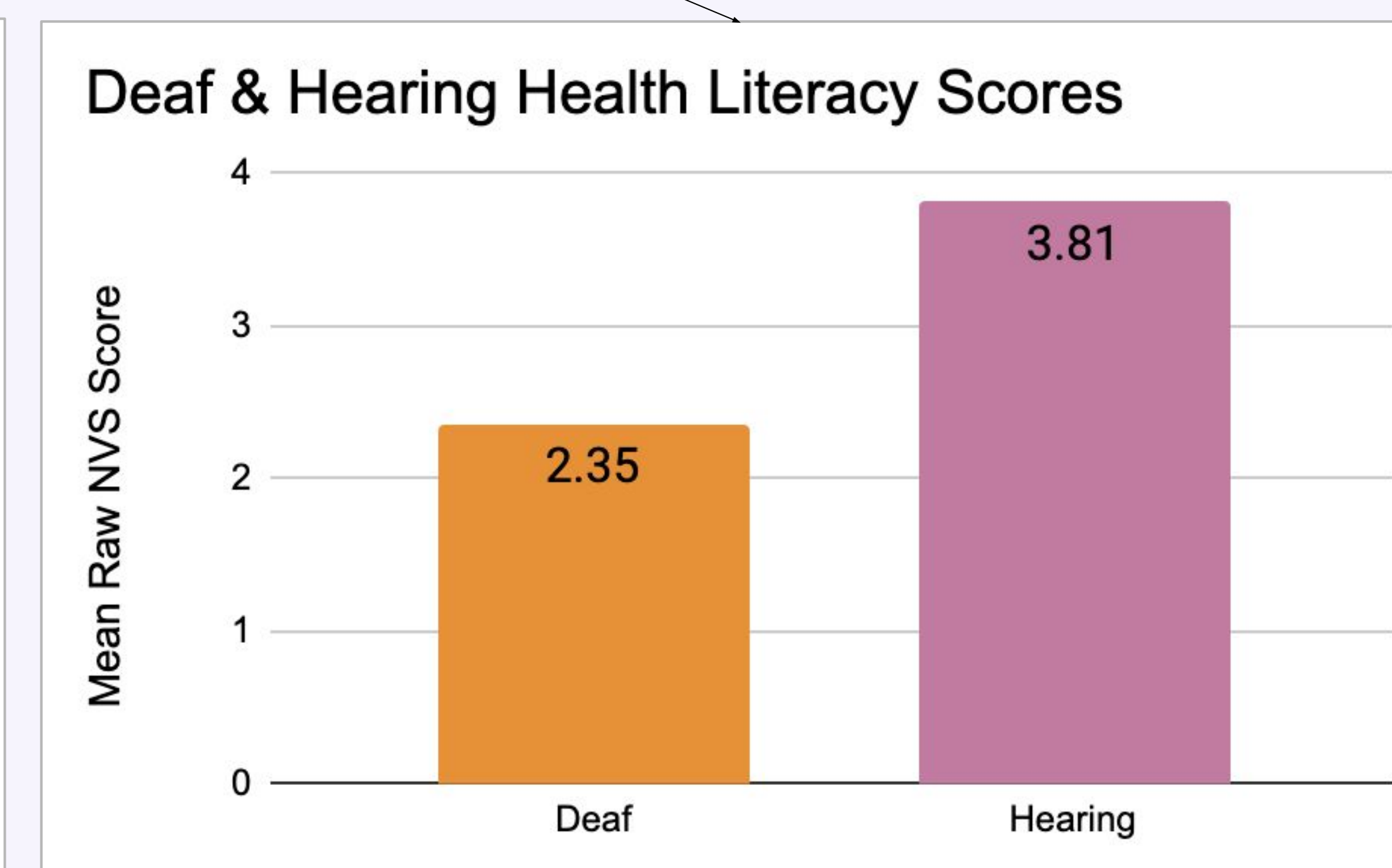
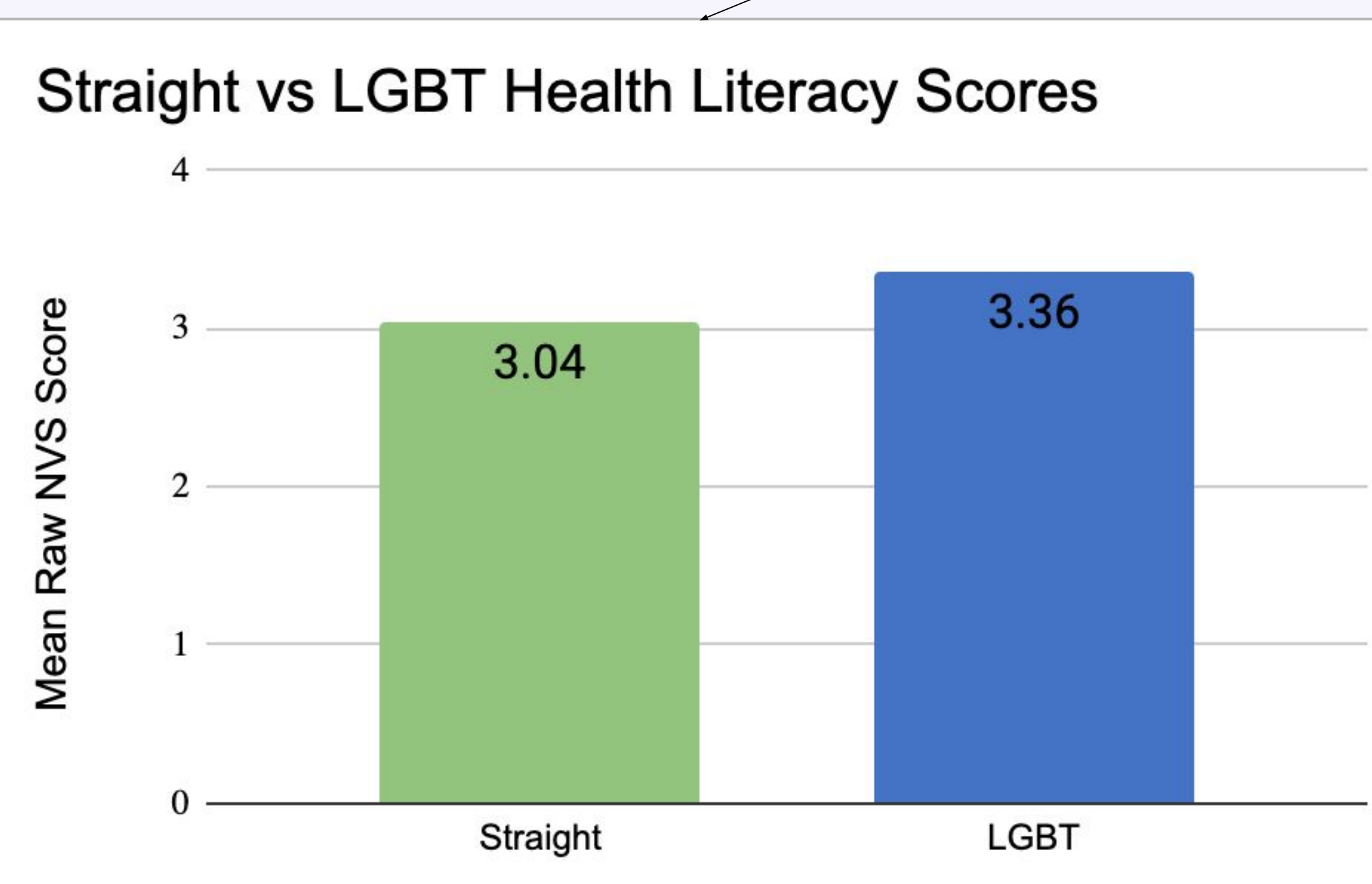
MATERIALS & METHODS

- This study from 2016-2019 will look into newly collected data from 892 individuals.
- All participants are required to complete the NVS screening. Results will then be analyzed and compared to see if there are disparities between deaf and LGBT minority groups, as well as if there is a greater impact on health literacy if an individual fits both requirements or is deaf LGBT as compared to deaf non-LGBT/hearing LGBT.



RESULTS

- A score of 0-1 represents inadequate health literacy, a score of 2-4 represents a risk for limited health literacy, and finally a score of 5-6 represents adequate health literacy.
- The Deaf vs Hearing individuals received average NVS scores of 2.35 and 3.81, respectively.
- The Straight vs LGBT individuals received NVS scores of 3.04 and 3.36, respectively, on average. The respective p-values are <.001 and .029.
- Making more information accessible can create a better environment to eliminate stigma around minority groups and then better health literacy.



CONCLUSIONS

- This study will help for years to come as performance scores can allow healthcare providers to determine where areas of weakness exist within communities, and if these disparities change between communities.
- Acknowledging these low health literacy scores can help the medical system to give back and provide better care for these communities and hopefully, improve health care for everyone and lower the stigma surrounding it all.
- Upon observation, the results did not go exactly as anticipated.
- The deaf vs hearing individuals represented a higher disparity between raw NVS scores.
- This is most likely due to a language barrier that prevents deaf individuals from understanding others and having access or fully obtaining the correct education regarding their health.
- This also plays a role in doctors offices where lack of interpreters may be present.
- Whereas for the straight vs LGBT individuals have a much smaller disparity and LGBT individuals actually show a larger raw NVS score than the straight individuals.
- This is not what was hypothesized. An LGBT individual, as part of a minority group, faces more stigma and oppression in their daily lives.
- Further analysis is needed to determine why we saw these results

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