

## e-Health Literacy among Portuguese Older Adults: the DigiHealth Project

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare the e-health literacy levels, before and after the implementation of a health education program, part of 'DigiHealth', an intergenerational project focused on developing digital health literacy in the elderly. The program ran for nine months, with weekly sessions lasting two hours. Each older person was given a tablet for personal use during the program. The activities, implemented by Higher Education students, required the use of these digital devices and internet access and were focused on health promotion, the access to public health services and the participation in online social networks as mechanisms to combat social isolation and loneliness. The analysis of the program's impact was performed by comparing the levels of e-health literacy among a convenience sample of 25 elderly living in the north of Portugal, before and after the program implementation (pre-test and post-test). The participants were assessed before and after the program's implementation, using the Portuguese version of the e-Health Literacy Scale (EeLS), which integrates 3 sub-scales: Functional e-Literacy, Communicational e-Literacy and Critical e-Literacy. Although no statistically significant differences were found in the levels of health e-literacy between the pre-test and post-test, the results show a tendency for these levels to improve, not only when taking the total health e-literacy scale as a reference, but also in its dimensions. This study serves as an additional contribution to the mobilisation of community-based educational practices that enhance health literacy levels, thus contributing to the promotion of the well-being and health of older adults.

**Keywords:** digital; education; elderly; health; impact