Moving Towards Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence

Literature Review Findings & Discussion

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HEALTH LITERACY IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE (HLCA)

A TARGET FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PRIMARY PREVENTION

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The Project

- Systematic literature review to scope the state of the art of HLCA
- Synthesis of child development factors with possible relevance for HLCA

Knowledge collection and synthesis

Theory, concept and model development

- Analyzing and evaluating the results from the scoping exercises
- Exploring relevant cross-disciplinary approaches
- Developing target group-specific definitions, models, embedded in a holistic, conceptual framework

Integration of HLCA perspective

- Evaluating and adjusting present adult health literacy models to integrate perspectives of HLCA
Aim & Objectives

Elaboration of the state-of-the art of generic HL conceptualizations for children and adolescents, younger than 18, in the English- and German-speaking context.

Research questions:
Which definition, concepts and models do exist for the target group that
a) either have been specifically developed, or
b) are used and applied
Methodology

Eligibility criteria:

• Published after 1980 in English or German
• **Topic**: General health literacy (excluding disease/topic-specific HL)
• **Target population**: Child or adolescent <18 years; considering relevance for life-course
• **Focus on Sub-topic**:
  • Prevalence of definition, conceptualization, components, or
  • Theoretical explorations of relevance for answering the research questions
Results

Records identified through database searching (n=1595)

Additional records identified through reference list of the articles included for analysis (n=13)

Records after duplicates removed (n=792)

Records screened (n=792) → Records excluded (n=583)

Full-text articles assessed for eligibility (n=209)

47 of studies included in qualitative synthesis

1) No focus on target group (N=40)
2) No theory, concept, model of definition described (N=52),
3) Focus on topic/domain specific health literacy (N=43)
4) Not available in English or German (N=7)
6) Document type - no research document (N=14)
7) Excluded for other reasons (N=6)
Definition (I)

- 11 originally developed for target group, 28 used available definitions, 8 none

- **Target group**
  - Children (n=1)
  - Adolescents (n=3)
  - School students & various ages in TG (n=4)
  - Life-course perspective (n=3)

- **Settings:**
  - School education (n=4)
  - Health (care) setting (n=3)
  - Various settings (n=2)
  - Not specified (n=2)
Definition (II) – Content Analysis

**Components:** set/range of skills, knowledge, competencies, capacity,

**Tasks/actions:** access, understand, appraise, evaluate, organize, use information; cope with changes; interact with people

**Subjects:** health information, physical/psycho-social activities

**Source:** from a variety of platforms

**Objective/Purpose:** task-focused or general health and lifestyles

**Requirements:** age appropriate, culturally relevant, and socially supported materials; demands reasonable autonomy

**Time:** process that evolves over one’s lifetime/lifecourse
## Models & Conceptualizations

21 identified

### Target group:
- Adolescents (n=11)
- Various ages in TG (n=2)
- Together with adults/ life-course perspective (n=8)

### Settings:
- School education (n=9)
- Health (care) (n=4)
- Various settings (n=6)
- Not specified (n=2)

### Rationale for target group provided:
- Yes (n=14) / No (n=7)

### Were components…
- Mentioned (n=6)
- Elaborated (n=10)
- Applied (n=4)

### Were components age-adopted?
- Yes (n=7) / No (n=14)
Fig. 1. A framework for studying adolescent health literacy [35, 46].

[Manganello, NURS HEALTH SCI, 2008]
Health literacy as learning outcomes for school health education:

Theoretical knowledge
• Knowledge (principles, theories, and concepts) all-round health;  

Practical knowledge
• Procedural situation-specific health-related knowledge or skills;

Critical thinking
• Approach knowledge from various angles, form arguments, make decisions;

Self-awareness
• Ability to self-reflect; describe topics from personal perspective;

Citizenship
• Ability to act in an ethically-responsible way and take social responsibility;

Cross-cutting themes: Basic reading, writing and speech skills, social, communication, and information-gathering skills
Impressions of findings

- Conceptualizations are
  - Very divers and multi-faceted;
- Focus on individual skills with relevance for the individual, the community and society;
- Recognition of social structures & systems, but explanation or specifications are lacking

- Lack of evidence for child (aged <12) population;
- Differentiation to HL in adults is often not clear;
- Professional vs. target group’s perceptions of health literacy.
Where to move from here?

How to consider the target group?

• Recognition as own group
  • Different needs/demands, resources than adults

• Objects of protection or embodied social actors?
  • Intergenerational and power relations
  • Active citizens?

• As embedded in culture, context and social settings
  • Role of social structures & institutions

• Many health literacies?
Outlook: (Re)Thinking the Basics

(Re)Thinking Health
- Biomedical Models
- Social Models
- Social-ecological Models
- Salutogenic Models

(Re)Thinking Literacy
- Cognitive Perspectives
- Psycholinguistic Perspectives
- Sociocultural Perspectives
- New Literacy studies
- Multiliteracies
- Critical Literacy

(Re)Thinking Child Development
- Infants
- Toddlers
- Preschoolers
- Middle Childhood
- Teenagers
- Young Teens

Centre for Prevention and Intervention in Childhood and Adolescence
Bibliography of Reviewed Studies


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Thank you for listening!

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