

Figuring out the meaning of health literacy during childhood and adolescence – complementing evidence from a systematic literature review with multiple approaches from adherent disciplines

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Introduction: Health Literacy (HL) has in the recent past gained momentum as a topic of health promotion and primary prevention. As the focus of most of the discussion remains predominately on adults, the relevance of HL for children and adolescents still needs to be explored more comprehensively. The German "Health Literacy in Childhood and Adolescence (HLCA)" consortium tackles this gap by conceptualizing HL from a multidisciplinary perspective and developing an integrated definition and model of child/adolescents HL, capturing dimensions related to the target group.

Methods: The approach is twofold: a) A systematic review was performed between Mar-Sep 2015 by two researchers to identify HL definitions and models for persons aged <18. In parallel, b) the team explored theoretical entry-points for child/adolescents HL, drawing upon evidence and expertise from adherent disciplines. The results inform the development of a working definition and model, which will then be opened up for expert validation.

Results: A) 13 models were identified to directly or indirectly target children and adolescents. Preliminary results indicate that these models dominantly focus on individual skill-sets, with inconsistencies and limitations regarding potential HL mediators and moderators, as well as structural and contextual factors. B) Possible entry-points discussed are the dimensions applied by Rothman et al. (2009), namely differential epidemiology, demographic patterns, developmental change, dependency, Schön's (1987) approach of reflective coaching and ideas of democratic practice as well as different autonomous- vs. ideologically-oriented literacy perspectives.

Conclusions: The multifaceted approach for conceptualizing child/adolescents HL aims at contributing to the understanding of HL in the target group by providing a definition and hands-on model. The model should consider intergenerational and power relations, children's image and their role as active citizens within the community and societal settings as well as age-group specific vulnerabilities and risk patterns. It can serve as conceptual base for program or intervention development, as well as a quantitative measurement tool, to be developed in a parallel HLCA sub-project.

Rothman, RL et al. (2009). Health literacy and quality: focus on chronic illness care and patient safety. *Pediatrics*, 124(Suppl. 3), S315-326.

Schön, DA. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.