

HEALTH LITERACY IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE (HLCA)

AS A TARGET FOR HEALTH PROMOTION AND PRIMARY PREVENTION –

THE GERMAN HLCA CONSORTIUM

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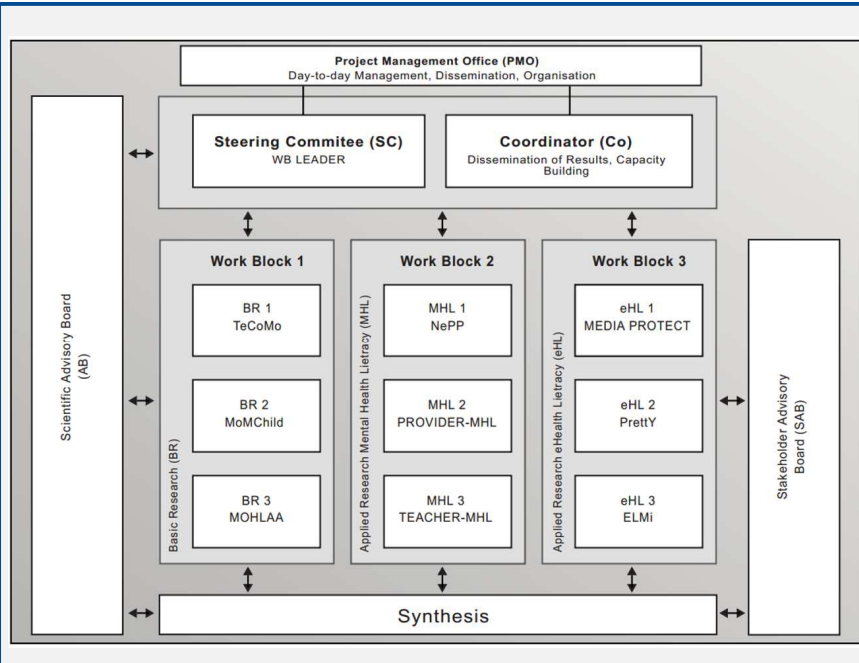
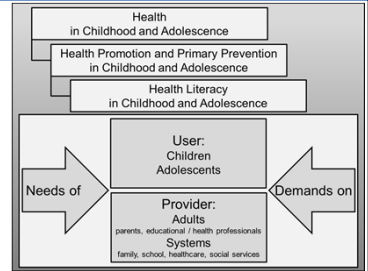
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RATIONALE Current concepts no longer restrict the meaning of health literacy to functional skills (e.g. reading abilities, numeracy) but put emphasis on other skills required to access, appraise and use health information [1,2,3]. Integrative health literacy concepts address underlying competences and motivation as well [3], and therefore connect to the perspective of literacy as a social practice. The widened understanding of health literacy has also been recognized for its quality to shift the focus from the individual-level to social environmental forces impacting on health at population- and system-levels [1,3,4]. Empirical data substantiate the importance of health literacy. High prevalences of low health literacy levels in high-income countries and inequalities in the distribution of health literacy have consistently been reported. Findings on the association between health literacy and various health outcomes add to the relevance. Decreased use of preventative services, poorer engagement in health-promoting behaviours, in communicating with health professionals and in sharing decision-making processes, or higher mortality and morbidity rates are some of the outcomes associated with lower health literacy [1,5,6]. Information on health literacy in children and adolescents is, however, poor. Limitations affect theoretical, conceptual as well as empirical data. This contrasts to the importance that is given to childhood and youth for healthy human development, and for health and well-being throughout life. It can thus easily be concluded that health literacy may act in children and adolescents as an even more critical and modifiable factor for health promotion and primary prevention than in adults.

THE CONSORTIUM The HLCA consortium was launched autumn 2013 to promote multi-perspective research (see Fig.1) into health literacy in childhood and adolescence with a transdisciplinary approach involving academic partners and stakeholder from Public Health and Education, and other working in settings relevant for children and adolescents in- and outside healthcare. The leading partners are located at the University Duisburg-Essen and the University of Education Freiburg.

The consortium aims at contributing to a comprehensive understanding of health literacy in children and adolescents by developing, adjusting, implementing, and evaluating theoretical, conceptual and methodological health literacy approaches linked to children and adolescents. Our approach includes an equally targeting of the health literacy of adults and systems with impact on child development. We will work on basic research as well as on applied research, here with foci on mental health literacy and eHealth literacy. The HLCA consortium will be funded by the German Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from autumn 2014–2017.



CONSORTIUM'S STRUCTURE The HLCA consortium consists of three work blocks (WB 1-3), each including three subprojects. WBs are grouped by topics: Basic research (WB1); applied research on mental health literacy (WB2) and eHealth literacy (WB3). There are two regional clusters: WB2 will be implemented in North Rhine-Westphalia, WB3 in Baden-Württemberg. A synthesis project will be implemented in year three. A Steering Committee (SC) will act as supervisory body. It will be responsible for monitoring the consortium's progress and for implementing a quality assuring process. The consortium will be backed by a scientific and a stakeholder advisory board.

INNOVATIONS AND EXPECTED RESULTS

- Increased evidence on the relevance of health literacy for childhood and adolescence. Improved understanding of the causal pathways linking environmental factors with individual dispositions, health behaviours and health outcomes.
- Availability of concepts and methods for children and adolescents.
- First data on health literacy levels / profiles in children and adolescents.
- Availability of health literacy education and training programs. Improved knowledge base of professionals dealing with children and adolescents in Public Health, Education, and Social Work.
- Knowledge about needs of children at risk, their families, and provider of healthcare, social services and schools for mental health literacy. Improved understanding of barriers in access to health promotion and primary prevention. Specified recommendations for policy-making.
- Implemented mental health literacy programs in teachers' training.
- Evidence on the impact of a primary preventive intervention on media use in middle childhood; knowledge about needs of adolescents on eHealth services and the impact of health inequalities on the use of eHealth information in adolescents.

BASIC RESEARCH

TeCoMo - Theories, Concepts and Models
University Duisburg-Essen
Development of a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual framework on health literacy in childhood and adolescence

MoMChild - Methods of Measuring Health Literacy of Children
University Duisburg-Essen
Development of a questionnaire to assess functional, communicative, critical and dispositional health literacy of 9 and 10-year-old children

MOHLAA - Measurement of Health Literacy Among Adolescents
Robert Koch Institute Berlin
Development of an assessment tool measuring health literacy of adolescents in Germany

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

NePP - Needs for Primary Prevention in Families with Mentally Ill Parents
Catholic University of Applied Sciences Paderborn
Identifying problems of and challenges for child-oriented primary prevention from a family perspective in families with at least one mentally-ill parent

PROVIDER-MHL - Parents Suffering from Mental Disorders and Their Unaffected Children in Municipal Child and Youth Services. A Multi-level Survey on Professionals' and Providers' Skills
University Duisburg-Essen

TEACHER-MHL - Health Promotion for Children of Mentally Ill Parents. Assessment and Promotion of Teacher-specific Mental Health Literacy
University Duisburg-Essen

EHEALTH LITERACY

MEDIA PROTECT - Effectiveness of a Brief Parental Intervention to Prevent Problematic Screen Media Use in Children 4-7 Years of Age - A Prospective Cluster Randomized Trial
University of Education Freiburg

Pretty - Preaching to the Young? Digital Health Offers for Children and Adolescents
University of Education Freiburg

eLMi - eHealth Literacy and Minority Health: An Ethnographic Study on Health-Related Use of New Media among Disadvantaged Adolescents with Russian and Afghan Migration Background
Arnold Bergstraesser Institute for Social Research & University of Freiburg

PARTICIPATING GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS

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