



Review article

Community based health literacy interventions in India: A scoping review

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ABSTRACT

Background: Low levels of Health Literacy (HL) are a global concern as it is unrecognized and widespread. The objective of this review was to identify various community interventions that improved HL rates among the Indian population and to document their health outcomes as reported.

Methods: The scoping review was guided by Arskey and O'Malley scoping review methodology. The search was conducted in six databases. Articles were screened at title-abstract and full-text and data was abstracted by two individuals independently. The review was reported according to the (PRISMA- ScR). Intervention data was captured according to the TiDER checklist.

Results: A total of nine studies were included from the searches conducted in databases. Of these, five focused on the change in behaviour and four identified the importance of education in improving HL among people in the community. The interventions included: traditional interventions, art-based interventions, interactive learning-based interventions, and technology-based interventions.

Conclusion: There are few community-based interventions to improve the health literacy of the population. It is essential to empower communities in making well-informed health decisions. It is important to include healthcare workers in designing and implementing health literacy interventions to improve the outcomes.

1. Introduction

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.¹ The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition. Literacy plays a central role in health care.² The ability to understand the complexities of the health-care system and engage in health-related behaviours are both influenced by a person's level of Health Literacy (HL).³ Health literacy is "The degree to which the individuals can obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate decisions".⁴

People can protect and promote their health by adopting healthy behaviours and adhering to recommendations when they have access to accurate, simple-to-use information.⁵ Health status is improved, and the use of, and expenses associated with, healthcare services are decreased

when one is proficient in HL.⁶ Negative effects may result from interactions between established determinants of poor health and low literacy levels.⁷ Inadequate HL results in lower adherence to preventive behaviors, weaker compliance with health interventions, and poor self-care.⁴ Low HL increases the risk of readmission after lengthy hospital stays, as well as the need for unnecessary emergency care.⁸

In India, at least nine out of ten individuals lack health literacy.⁹ Additionally, India has a high rate of general illiteracy and extreme poverty, both of which have a negative impact on HL. Frequent hospital visits are a result of an unhealthy lifestyle.⁹ Most people would not be able to afford the cost of the services or the drugs that were prescribed, if paid out of pocket, even if they had the money for transportation.¹⁰ Poor health insurance coverage in India is one of the main effects of low HL.¹¹ Despite an increase in the proportion of insured people over the past five years, there is still a sizable gap in coverage across the nation, particularly in rural areas. Except for Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, and Kerala, all major states and Union Territories have less than 50% of

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