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SCOPING REVIEW

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HEALTH LITERACY OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF HEALTH CARE: A SCOPING REVIEW PROTOCOL

Letramento em saúde de adolescentes no contexto de cuidados em saúde: protocolo de revisão de escopo
Alfabetización sanitaria de los adolescentes en el contexto de la atención sanitaria: un protocolo de revisión exploratoria

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Mapear os estudos sobre a relevância do letramento em saúde para os cuidados de saúde voltados aos adolescentes.

Método: protocolo para a revisão do escopo que será desenvolvido conforme a metodologia proposta pelo Instituto Joanna Briggs com as orientações do Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for Scoping Reviews. O levantamento será realizado em nove bases de dados. Dois revisores farão a triagem inicial por meio de títulos e resumos, posteriormente lerão os artigos completos e extraírão informações dos estudos selecionados. Os dados coletados serão organizados e classificados em categorias, de acordo com seu conteúdo. **Resultados:** espera-se conhecer o letramento em saúde em adolescentes no contexto de seus cuidados de saúde. **Considerações finais:** os resultados obtidos serão compartilhados com a comunidade acadêmica e os responsáveis pela formulação de políticas públicas focadas na saúde do adolescente.

DESCRITORES: Cultura em saúde; Adolescente; Promoção da saúde; Participação do paciente; Revisão.

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to map studies on the relevance of health literacy for healthcare aimed at adolescents. **Method:** the review protocol will be developed according to the Joanna Briggs Institute's methodology and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for scoping reviews. The review will be conducted across nine databases. Two reviewers will initially screen titles and abstracts, then read full articles and extract information from selected studies. The collected data will be organized and classified into categories according to their content. **Results:** it is expected to provide insight into the health literacy of adolescents in the context of healthcare. **Final considerations:** the results obtained will be shared with the academic community and those responsible for the formulation of public policies focused on adolescent health.

DESCRIPTORS: Culture in health; Adolescent; Health promotion; Patient participation; Review.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Mapear los estudios sobre la relevancia de la alfabetización en salud para la atención de la salud dirigida a adolescentes. **Método:** Protocolo para la revisión del alcance que se desarrollará de acuerdo a la metodología propuesta por el Instituto Joanna Briggs con los lineamientos de los Preferred Reporting Items para las revisiones sistemáticas y la extensión de Meta-Análisis para las Revisiones Exploratorias. La encuesta se llevará a cabo en nueve bases de datos. Dos revisores realizarán la evaluación inicial a través de títulos y resúmenes, luego leerán los artículos completos y extraerán información de los estudios seleccionados. Los datos recabados se organizarán y clasificarán en categorías, según su contenido. **Resultados:** Se espera conocer la alfabetización en salud de los adolescentes en el contexto de su atención a la salud. **Consideraciones finales:** Los resultados obtenidos serán compartidos con la comunidad académica y los responsables de la formulación de políticas públicas enfocadas en la salud del adolescente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Cultura en salud; Adolescente; Promoción de la salud; Participación de los pacientes; Revisión.

INTRODUCTION

Among the various concepts attributed to health literacy (HL), it can be understood as an individual's ability to seek, understand, and use health-related information to promote and maintain good health.¹ In other words, HL represents the intersection of education and health, equipping individuals with the ability to read and understand information related to specific diseases, as well as health promotion and harm prevention.²

Notably, HL is intersectoral and interactive. It can be considered a modifiable social determinant of health and an essential element for development throughout life cycles, particularly during adolescence.³ In this sense, HL becomes more prevalent and understood during this life cycle.⁴

According to this, it is observed that this group socializes in different scenarios and contexts, exposing themselves to visible and invisible influences that often prevent them from making their own health-related decisions.⁵

Therefore, HL in adolescents differs from HL in adults because, even when unable to read and interpret health-related texts, adolescents can learn healthy behaviors from their family or social environment and self-manage their health.⁴

A high level of HL enables adolescents to take control of their health because it mediates decision-making related to health and the adoption of protective behaviors.⁶

However, HL is still under-explored and underutilized in the context of health practices in Brazil. There are no national data estimating the health literacy status of the Brazilian population, especially adolescents, nor are there public health policies to promote health literacy in the country.⁷

Although there is a lot of literature discussing HL in national and international contexts, a search in the JBI, Cochrane Library, and PubMed databases using the terms "health literacy," "adolescent," and "health care" did not yield any systematic, integrative, narrative, or scoping reviews addressing the topic.

Using the mnemonic device Participants, Concept, Context (PCC) to elaborate the research question, the following question was raised: How can HL contribute to adolescent healthcare?

The objective of this review is therefore to map studies on the relevance of HL for adolescent healthcare.

METHOD

To achieve the established objective based on the research question, the scoping review methodology was chosen. This methodology is conceptualized as a systematic review that aims to map concepts and results related to the topic of interest. These concepts and results are extracted from the main data sources using a knowledge synthesis approach.

The base protocol for performing scoping reviews was developed following the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI)⁸ manual for scoping reviews and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses extension for scoping reviews⁹. The estimated execution period for this review is five months (March to October 2025).

This protocol is registered on the Open Science Framework (OSF) platform under the DOI 10.17605/OSF.IO/WMSJ3

Research Question

The research question, “How can HL contribute to adolescent healthcare?” was formulated according to the PCC mnemonic established by the JBI manual⁸. The P stands for population, which is adolescents; the C stands for concept, which is health literacy; and the C stands for context, which is healthcare.

Research Strategy

The search strategy will consist of a combination of controlled descriptors and keywords according to each electronic database. To search for articles, we will use the MeSH and DeCS controlled descriptors “Health literacy (*Letramento em saúde*)” AND “Adolescent (*Adolescente*)” OR “Young (*Jovem*)” AND “Health care (*Cuidados em saúde*)”. Two independent researchers will carry out the search strategy according to the JBI’s methodological recommendations.

Primary studies will be searched, including clinical trials, cohort studies, case-control studies, cross-sectional studies, qualitative studies, and secondary studies, such as systematic reviews, scoping reviews, meta-analyses, and narrative reviews, with the aim of gathering a broad and diverse base of evidence on the subject.

Full articles published within the last ten years, regardless of year or duration, written in English, Portuguese, or Spanish, will be considered.

Studies will be selected through the Rayyan™ review platform, developed by the Qatar Computing Research Institute, to store, organize, and delete duplicates, ensuring a systematic, comprehensive, and manageable search.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies of those whose participants are adolescents aged nine to 15 years who received healthcare will be included. There will be no restrictions on geographic location. Regarding the concept, the study should address the care, techniques, protocols, or HL methods used to improve adolescent healthcare. The context will highlight adolescent

health care. Adolescent healthcare should be integrated and continuous. In this sense, all studies involving this context will be included.

Data Extraction

First, an initial search was conducted in two electronic databases: MEDLINE (PubMed) and the Virtual Health Library (VHL). Next, the words contained in the titles, abstracts, and keywords of the found articles were analyzed. These descriptors were then compared to those registered in the MeSH database for PubMed searches and the DeCS database for VHL searches. The final set of descriptors was used for this scoping review.

Then, a search will be conducted using keywords and specific terms in the following databases: PubMed, BVS, SciELO, Web of Science, SCOPUS, and CINAHL according to the defined search strategy.

A third search will be conducted in gray literature through Google Scholar, completing the search across seven databases.

Note that a pilot test will be conducted with ten articles by two reviewers to ensure data capture accuracy. If there is disagreement regarding any problem item or variable, it will be resolved through discussion with a third reviewer.

Additionally, an analysis of the references used in the selected articles included in the review will be conducted if necessary, or contact will be made with the authors of the primary studies or reviews to obtain additional information about the published studies.

Selection of Studies

Two independent researchers will carry out the study selection process. In case of divergences, a third researcher will assist with the final decision of whether to include the study. Thus, the screening of articles will take place during the selection process:

- 1) sorting by year of publication;
- 2) sorting by title;
- 3) sorting by summary;
- 4) full-text screening.

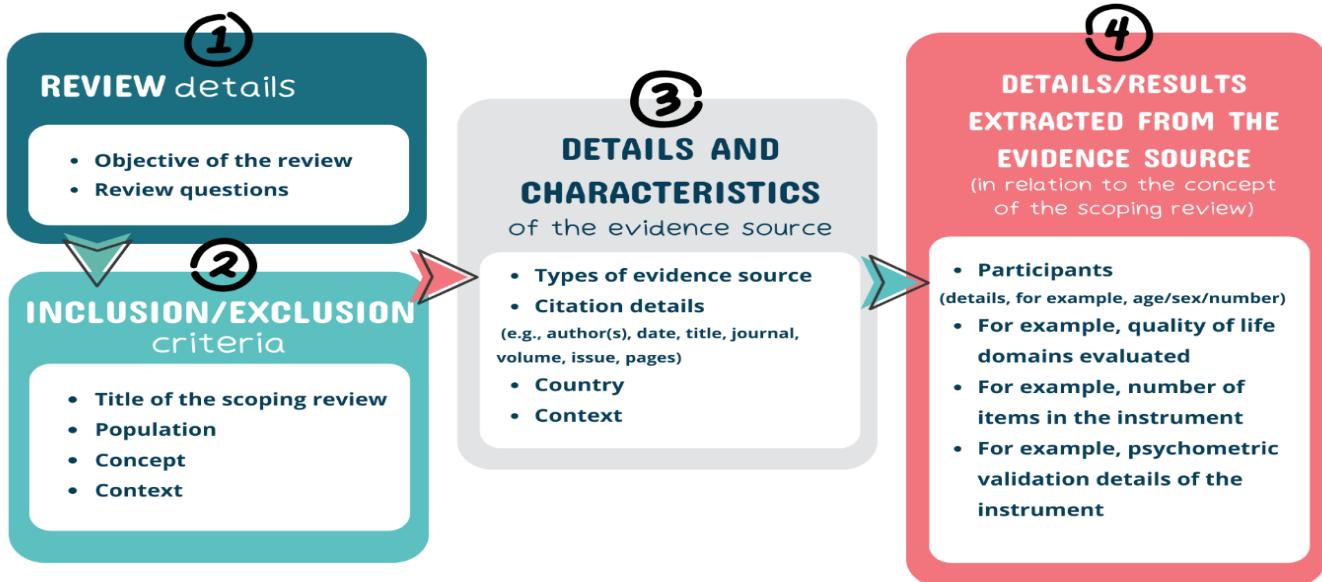
The results of the search strategy and the study inclusion process will then be reported in full and presented in a PRISMA-ScR flowchart⁹. It should be noted that the methodological quality of the included articles will not be assessed, as this is unnecessary for a scoping review.⁸

Data Extraction

After selecting the articles that will comprise the review, an Excel spreadsheet will be prepared. Independent reviewers will extract data from the selected studies using a JBI manual containing the following information: article title, publication

year, authors, study objectives, method, population, study design, main conclusions, and findings that answer the question and objective of this scoping review. The extracted data will be reviewed to ensure all relevant results are included, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Extraction tool with details, characteristics, and results of the JBI model. Belém, PA, Brazil, 2025



Source: Aromataris et al., 2024.

RESULTS

According to the JBI manual, the results will be analyzed and presented through narrative synthesis, as well as the use of tables and graphs. This process will allow for the identification of gaps in literature, possible limitations of the review, and possible themes for future reviews.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aims to contribute to our understanding of the importance of health literacy (HL) in health care for adolescents. Through a scoping review, we will map existing studies to offer a comprehensive view of HL practices aimed at adolescents. This will highlight the relevance of HL for empowering the youth to take charge of their health and make informed decisions.

In addition, the review will identify gaps in the literature and areas that require further investigation, particularly regarding the study's theme.

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