

Are we measuring the same thing?

Exploring the link between health literacy and eHealth literacy in adults

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Introduction

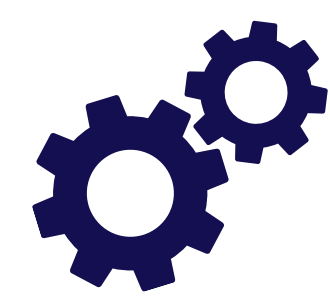
- Both **health literacy & eHealth literacy** involve the ability to access, understand & use health information
- Both are essential for effective health management & decision-making
- However, their relationship is not well understood
- Studying them together may better explain how people navigate healthcare



Research questions

What is the association between health literacy & eHealth literacy in adults?

What are the biopsychosocial correlates of both constructs?



Methods

OSF pre-registered protocol: <https://osf.io/jrwpd>

Databases: CINAHL - Embase - Emcare - ProQuest - PsycINFO - PubMed - Web of Science (no date limits)

Study selection: 2336 titles & abstracts, 963 full texts

Study quality evaluation: QualSyst Checklist

Statistical analyses: Pearson's r correlations; Subgroup analyses: mixed effects model



Key findings

Included studies:

- 23 observational studies
- Published from 2018 to 2025
- 18 countries
- Good to very high reporting quality

Pooled sample:

- 25,505 participants
- 64% women
- Age range: 20 - 51 years
- General community & clinical samples

Weak but significant association between health literacy & eHealth literacy:
 $r_w = 0.29, p < .001$

Stronger for comprehensive ($r_w = .42, p < .01$) than functional measures ($r_w = .10, p = .06$)

Strong health & eHealth literacy associations with:

- Educational & economic advantage
- Health-promoting behaviours
- Self-efficacy
- Access & use of internet resources

Weak associations with:

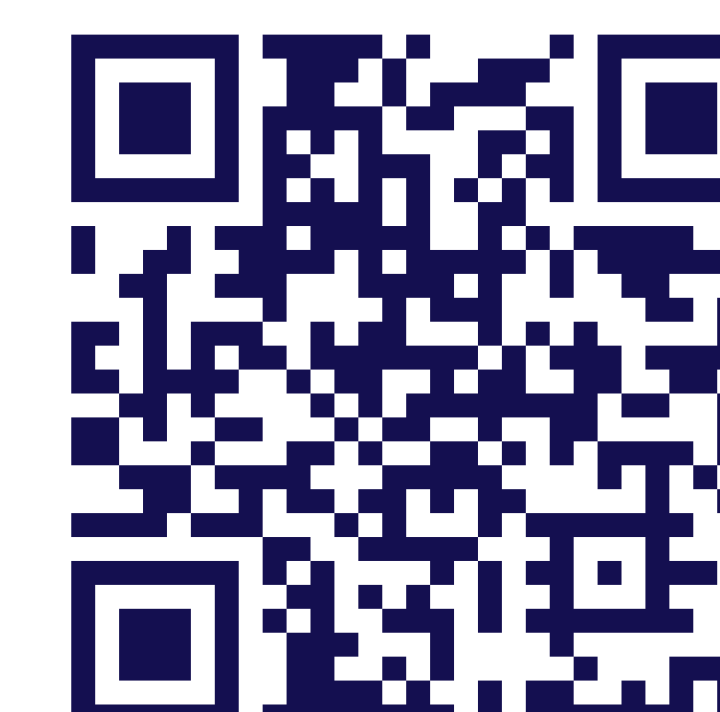
- Age
- Employment status
- Self-rated health
- Lifestyle habits (diet, sleep, smoking)



Implications

Using reliable, population-appropriate health literacy tools is essential for valid findings & accurate measurement.

More attention to the broader environmental, social, & economic factors that shape an individual's health literacy skills is needed.



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