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| **Proposing a target group-centered understanding for the health literacy of children and young people** |
| **Background/Objectives**Strengthening children’s and young people’s health literacy (HL) is a health equity issue as HL is considered a modifiable risk factor for socioeconomic disparities in health. While a variety of heterogeneous HL definitions and models for children and young people exist, their realities, assets and needs as well as their interdependency within power-relations were found to remain insufficiently integrated. As conceptual understandings provide the foundations for interventions and actions, it is important to assess whether they are tailored to and applicable for the target group. To address these challenges, this research aims to discuss and propose a child-centred analytical understanding of HL.**Methods** The conceptual explorations draw on the results from (a) a systematic review of available concepts and models, (b) an explorative review of relevant literature from literacy, development and child sociology research, (c) expert consultations, including close consultations within the German Health Literacy of Children and Adolescents -research consortium.**Results**HL is understood as a social, relational construct that entails how children and young people seek, interact and deal with health-related, multi-modal information from various sources in different situations in everyday life and the health (care) settings, taking into account children‘s rights for participation and protection. The proposed integrated definition and underlying theoretical framework argue for a shift from a skill-focused HL understanding towards an agency and asset focused approach. As such, the interdependence between (a) children’s and young people’s own HL abilities and (b) the contextual opportunities and conditions that determine whether they are able to use their abilities is being emphasized.**Discussion**The research addressed the question of what are the distinctive components of a child-centred health literacy understanding. This research systematically elaborated and reflected on the conceptual understanding of HL for children and young people from a holistic, interdisciplinary, target group-centred perspective. Although further research and validation is needed, the proposed interactive, participatory approach to HL can serve as conceptual base for future efforts for measuring, operationalising and promoting HL in the target group.**Keywords**health literacy, childhood, youth, concept, definition |