

To examine the status of health literacy of farmers: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Health literacy is a composite term used to describe “the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (Institute of Medicine Committee on Health, 2004, Marshall et al., 2012) . Many researchers have also suggested the literacy skills of an individual can be a stronger predictor of health status than age, employment status, education status, racial or ethnic group. Education interventions can play a vital role in the development of health literacy, as health literacy is a partly knowledge-based concept with health information needing to be studied, comprehended, and interpreted.

The aim of this research paper is to provide a systematic review of the published literature examining the status of health literacy amongst farmers. The objective of the systematic review is to (1) establish a baseline of health literacy status amongst farmers and (2) to examine interventions that could encourage health-enhancing behaviours in the farming cohort.

The systematic literature review diligently followed the Preferred Reporting items for systematic review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (PRISMA-P) (Liberati et al., 2009, Moher et al., 2009). An initial search of three databases resulted in the identification of 20 research records. After searching reference lists for similar articles on each database, a further eight records were identified for inclusion in this review (PubMed n=2, Embase n=2 and Scopus n=4).

This systematic review highlighted several common health issues and concerns affecting farmers across the world, including access to essential health care services, occurrence of pesticide poisoning, health and wellbeing concerns and access to essential health and safety training. This systematic review provides an overview of the relevant research relating to status of health literacy of farmers and can be utilised as a starting point to positively impact on the status of health literacy and health enhancing behaviours in farming cohorts through education and training.