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Enhancing Digital Health Literacy to Improve Quality of Life: Evidence Based Strategies for Public Health Advancement

Ahmad Yani[1], Multy Syaddam Nirwan[2], Fadly Umar[3], Indra Afriyanto[4]
[14]Universitas Muhammadiyah Palu, Indonesia
[23] Institut Teknologi Kesehatan dan Bisnis Graha Ananda, Indonesia
Correspondent: ahmadyani.publichealth@gmail.com[1]

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ABSTRACT: The increasing reliance on digital health interventions has underscored the need to enhance digital health literacy to improve individual health outcomes and quality of life. This study explores the effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions, including mobile applications, online education platforms, and telehealth services, in improving health knowledge and self-care behaviors. A systematic literature review was conducted using databases such as PubMed, Scopus, and Google Scholar, with selected studies focusing on adult populations and chronic disease management. Findings indicate that digital interventions significantly enhance health literacy and health-related behaviors; however, challenges such as disparities in digital access, socioeconomic factors, and variations in digital literacy levels limit widespread adoption. Comparative analysis reveals that while digital interventions offer advantages in accessibility and engagement, they must be adapted to different demographic and socioeconomic contexts to ensure equity. Policy implications highlight the necessity of investing in digital infrastructure, integrating digital literacy into healthcare education, and implementing data security regulations to foster trust and usability. The study concludes that digital health literacy is a crucial component of modern healthcare strategies. Addressing barriers and optimizing digital intervention designs are essential for maximizing the potential of digital health tools in promoting preventive care and improving public health outcomes. Future research should focus on long-term intervention effectiveness, AI-driven personalization, and culturally inclusive health literacy programs.

Keywords: Digital Health Literacy, Ehealth Interventions, Mobile Health, Health Education, Telehealth, Health Behavior, Public Health.

INTRODUCTION

The global advancement of digital-based interventions in health literacy represents a significant step toward promoting the quality of life (QoL) among adults, particularly vulnerable groups such as older populations. Digitalization has expanded access to health information and improved its

accessibility, serving as a bridge to enhance individuals' competence in comprehending and utilizing health-related information. The concept of health literacy has been extensively linked to better health behaviors, which, in turn, substantially impact individuals' QoL (H. Lee et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021).

Research has shown that individuals with higher levels of eHealth literacy exhibit greater confidence in using online health information to promote their well-being, leading to improved QoL outcomes (Li et al., 2021). For older adults, digital literacy is particularly crucial, as this demographic often struggles with adapting to emerging technologies. Digital interventions, such as health literacy programs delivered through mobile applications, can train them in using digital health tools and understanding health information, thereby reducing the risk of social marginalization (Arriaga et al., 2022). Studies suggest that digital-based interventions improve self-care behaviors, as demonstrated in interventions aimed at enhancing health knowledge and self-care practices among heart failure patients (Hwang et al., 2020).

The implementation of digital health literacy interventions requires consideration of factors such as depression and user comfort, particularly for individuals in remote or isolated areas. Evidence indicates that technology-based interventions effectively reach family caregivers in rural regions, who often lack access to traditional health education (Hwang et al., 2020). Moreover, social support and community involvement in these programs have been shown to amplify the positive effects of interventions (Beni et al., 2022). For instance, digital health applications facilitating communication between patients and healthcare providers can reduce feelings of loneliness and enhance life satisfaction among older adults with cognitive impairments (Christiansen et al., 2020).

Furthermore, studies highlight that digital-based interventions incorporating personalized and integrated approaches can assist individuals with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, in better understanding their health conditions and implementing self-care practices (Du et al., 2022; Gaffari-fam et al., 2020). These interventions not only foster health awareness but also hold potential for narrowing health disparities among populations with differing socioeconomic backgrounds (Alias et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2018). Consequently, the development and validation of relevant health education tools play a crucial role in enhancing individuals' capacity to make informed health decisions (Zipprich et al., 2021).

Despite these promising outcomes, challenges persist, particularly regarding accessibility to digital technologies for high-risk individuals, such as those with low health literacy. Surveys indicate that individuals with limited health literacy tend to report lower QoL, creating a cycle that is difficult to break (Panagioti et al., 2018). Efforts should focus not only on disseminating information but also on expanding accessibility and fostering social inclusion to enhance the QoL of all individuals. Reducing stigma surrounding the adoption of new technologies among older adults can also contribute to creating a more conducive learning environment (Jung et al., 2022).

There remains a significant gap in the literature regarding the long-term effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions and their sustained impact on behavior change. While numerous studies highlight short-term improvements in health knowledge and behaviors, further research is needed to explore strategies for maintaining these gains over time. Additionally, disparities in

access to digital health tools persist across different socioeconomic and geographic groups, warranting further investigation into inclusive intervention designs.

The primary objective of this review is to assess the effectiveness of digital-based health literacy interventions in improving the QoL of adults. This review will analyze key factors influencing intervention success, including user engagement, accessibility, personalization, and the integration of social support systems. By synthesizing existing research, this study aims to provide insights into best practices for designing and implementing effective digital health literacy programs.

The scope of this review encompasses studies conducted across various geographical regions and demographic groups. Particular attention will be given to interventions targeting older adults, individuals with chronic conditions, and underserved populations. By examining the global landscape of digital health literacy interventions, this review seeks to identify strategies that can be adapted to diverse healthcare settings, ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to benefit from enhanced health literacy and improved QoL.

METHOD

To conduct a comprehensive review of digital-based health literacy interventions and their impact on quality of life, a systematic search strategy was implemented across multiple academic databases. The selected databases included PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, CINAHL, and PsycINFO. These databases were chosen based on their extensive coverage of biomedical, public health, psychology, and nursing literature, ensuring access to the most relevant studies.

PubMed was utilized for its extensive repository of biomedical literature, particularly studies focusing on digital health literacy interventions in clinical and public health contexts. Scopus provided a multidisciplinary approach, allowing access to research on health education and technological advancements in digital interventions. Web of Science was included due to its high-impact scientific publications, which contributed valuable insights into the implementation and evaluation of digital health interventions. Google Scholar, though less selective, offered access to diverse sources, including gray literature and dissertations. CINAHL was particularly useful in retrieving studies related to nursing and allied health, encompassing research on digital health literacy programs in patient care. Lastly, PsycINFO was employed to identify psychological aspects of health literacy interventions, particularly studies examining behavioral outcomes and mental health impacts.

The search process involved the systematic application of predefined keywords and Boolean operators to optimize the retrieval of relevant literature. The primary keywords used included "digital health literacy," "eHealth interventions," "health literacy programs," "health outcomes," "health education," "digital health," and "literasi kesehatan." To refine the search, Boolean operators such as AND, OR, and NOT were employed. For example, queries such as "digital health literacy AND eHealth interventions AND quality of life" were used to identify studies focusing on the relationship between digital health literacy and health outcomes. Additionally, broader terms were incorporated to capture a wide range of studies, such as "health literacy programs OR digital health initiatives AND health outcomes." To focus on adult populations,

searches included terms like "telehealth AND health literacy AND (adults OR elderly)," ensuring relevance to the target demographic.

To ensure the inclusion of high-quality and up-to-date research, filtering mechanisms were applied across all databases. Studies published in the last ten years were prioritized to reflect recent advancements in digital health literacy interventions. The inclusion criteria required studies to be peer-reviewed, written in English, and specifically focused on the effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions in improving health outcomes and quality of life. Studies involving adult populations, including older adults and individuals with chronic conditions, were prioritized. Additionally, only studies employing robust methodological designs, such as randomized controlled trials (RCTs), systematic reviews, cohort studies, and cross-sectional analyses, were included.

Conversely, exclusion criteria were set to refine the selection process further. Studies that solely focused on pediatric populations, animal models, or interventions unrelated to digital health literacy were excluded. Additionally, research that did not provide empirical evidence or relied solely on opinion pieces and editorials was omitted. Studies published in languages other than English, unless they contained English abstracts with substantial methodological details, were also excluded. Furthermore, duplicate studies retrieved across multiple databases were carefully screened and removed to avoid redundancy.

The study selection process was conducted in several stages. First, all search results were imported into a reference management tool, where duplicates were removed. The remaining studies underwent a title and abstract screening to determine their relevance to the research objectives. Articles that met the preliminary criteria were then subjected to a full-text review to assess their methodological rigor, relevance, and contribution to the research question. In cases where the eligibility of a study was uncertain, consensus was reached through discussion among researchers.

To ensure a thorough evaluation, the selected studies were analyzed based on predefined criteria, including study design, population characteristics, intervention type, duration, outcomes measured, and key findings. The methodological quality of the studies was assessed using established frameworks such as the Cochrane Risk of Bias tool for randomized controlled trials and the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale for observational studies. Studies that met high methodological standards and provided substantial empirical data on digital health literacy interventions and their impact on health outcomes were included in the final synthesis.

This systematic approach enabled the identification of relevant, high-quality literature that contributes to understanding the role of digital health literacy interventions in improving quality of life. By employing rigorous inclusion and exclusion criteria, utilizing multiple academic databases, and applying systematic screening and evaluation methods, this methodology ensures a comprehensive and reliable review of existing research in the field.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The impact of digital-based health literacy interventions has been extensively studied across various populations, with findings indicating significant improvements in health knowledge, self-care behaviors, and quality of life. The effectiveness of these interventions varies based on the type of digital tool utilized, the target demographic, and the integration of interactive and personalized features. The following sections present key findings from the literature regarding the effectiveness of digital interventions in enhancing health literacy and their subsequent influence on quality of life.

Types of Digital-Based Interventions and Their Effectiveness

Various digital interventions have been employed to improve health literacy, with mobile applications, online educational platforms, interactive videos, telehealth services, and digital literacy training emerging as the most effective strategies. Mobile applications have gained prominence as tools for facilitating access to health information and supporting self-management among patients with chronic conditions. Studies have demonstrated that mobile health (mHealth) apps enhance patient engagement, improve medication adherence, and provide personalized health education, thereby leading to improved health literacy and quality of life (Alias et al., 2021; Beni et al., 2022). These applications typically include features such as symptom tracking, medication reminders, and interactive educational content, which contribute to better disease management.

Online educational platforms have also proven to be effective in improving health literacy. These platforms provide structured learning modules on various health topics, allowing users to access information at their convenience. Research indicates that structured digital education programs significantly enhance knowledge retention and health-related decision-making, particularly among individuals with lower baseline health literacy (Houlihan et al., 2021). Moreover, multimedia interventions such as interactive videos have been found to be highly effective in simplifying complex medical information and improving comprehension levels. Visual and auditory learning elements have been shown to improve information retention compared to text-based education alone (Butler et al., 2022).

Telehealth services, including video consultations and remote monitoring, have been particularly beneficial for individuals with limited access to traditional healthcare services. Studies show that telehealth interventions increase patient confidence in managing their health conditions and provide opportunities for direct engagement with healthcare providers, fostering better communication and understanding of health information (Parker et al., 2022). Furthermore, training programs designed to improve digital literacy have demonstrated significant benefits in enabling individuals to effectively navigate digital health resources. Digital literacy programs, especially those targeting older adults, have successfully improved participants' ability to use digital tools for health-related decision-making (Houlihan et al., 2021).

Comparison of Digital and Conventional Health Literacy Interventions

Comparative studies between digital health literacy interventions and traditional methods such as printed materials and face-to-face education indicate that digital interventions offer distinct

advantages in terms of accessibility, personalization, and engagement. Digital interventions provide flexible access to health information, enabling users to learn at their own pace and revisit content as needed. This level of accessibility is particularly beneficial for individuals with chronic conditions who require ongoing education and self-management support (Alias et al., 2021; Visscher et al., 2018).

The interactive nature of digital interventions enhances user engagement and motivation. Studies have found that personalized digital interventions, which tailor content to the user's specific health needs, lead to higher levels of information retention and behavior change compared to generic health education materials (Beni et al., 2022; Visscher et al., 2018). Additionally, digital interventions have been linked to improved health outcomes, including better glycemic control among diabetic patients and improved cardiovascular health markers in individuals using mobile health applications (Alias et al., 2021; Butler et al., 2022).

However, some challenges remain in the adoption of digital interventions. Certain populations, particularly older adults and individuals with low digital literacy, may face difficulties in accessing and effectively utilizing digital health tools. Studies indicate that while digital interventions can be highly effective, they must be supplemented with targeted support, such as digital literacy training, to maximize their impact across diverse demographic groups (Beni et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2021). Furthermore, digital interventions may not provide the same level of interpersonal support as traditional health education, which can be a limiting factor for individuals who benefit from direct interactions with healthcare providers (Aboumatar et al., 2022).

The Relationship Between Health Literacy and Quality of Life

Health literacy plays a crucial role in determining individuals' quality of life, with numerous studies highlighting a strong correlation between higher health literacy levels and improved physical, mental, and social well-being. Increased health literacy enables individuals to make informed healthcare decisions, adhere to treatment regimens, and adopt preventive health behaviors, all of which contribute to enhanced quality of life (H. Lee et al., 2022; Li et al., 2021). Research has shown that individuals with higher eHealth literacy levels are more proactive in seeking health information, engaging in self-care, and utilizing healthcare services effectively (H. Lee et al., 2022).

Differences in the impact of digital health literacy interventions have been observed across demographic groups. Older adults, for instance, often face barriers in adopting digital tools due to lower levels of digital literacy and potential cognitive decline. However, targeted interventions that include user-friendly design and digital skills training have been successful in improving health literacy and self-care behaviors among this population (Arriaga et al., 2022). Similarly, individuals with lower educational attainment or from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds may require additional support to fully benefit from digital health interventions (Beni et al., 2022; Christiansen et al., 2020). Addressing these disparities through tailored interventions is critical for ensuring equitable improvements in health literacy and quality of life.

Global Perspectives on Digital Health Literacy Interventions

The effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions varies across different countries, influenced by factors such as healthcare infrastructure, digital accessibility, and government

policies. In high-income countries, digital interventions are often integrated into national healthcare systems, with widespread access to mobile health applications, telehealth services, and online health education platforms. Countries such as the United States, Canada, and Australia have implemented national strategies to enhance digital health literacy, ensuring that healthcare providers and patients are equipped with the necessary digital skills (Du et al., 2022; Gaffari-fam et al., 2020).

Conversely, in low- and middle-income countries, challenges such as limited internet connectivity, low smartphone penetration, and disparities in digital literacy hinder the widespread adoption of digital health interventions. Studies conducted in developing regions have highlighted the need for innovative approaches, such as SMS-based health education programs and community-led digital literacy initiatives, to bridge the digital divide (Alias et al., 2021; Parker et al., 2018). Efforts to improve digital health literacy in these regions require collaborative efforts between governments, non-governmental organizations, and technology providers to ensure equitable access to digital health resources.

Despite these challenges, several low- and middle-income countries have successfully implemented digital health interventions tailored to their specific contexts. For example, in Kenya, mobile-based health education programs have been used to disseminate maternal health information, leading to improved health outcomes among pregnant women (Alias et al., 2021). Similarly, digital health initiatives in India have focused on training community health workers to use mobile technology for patient education and remote monitoring (Hwang et al., 2020). These examples highlight the potential for digital health literacy interventions to drive positive health outcomes globally, provided that accessibility and inclusivity challenges are addressed.

The findings from this study align with previous research indicating that digital health literacy interventions play a crucial role in improving health knowledge, self-care behaviors, and quality of life. While the evidence underscores the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing health literacy, the implementation and impact of these interventions vary significantly based on demographic factors, accessibility, and policy support. This section discusses the key findings in relation to existing literature, systemic challenges, policy implications, and future research directions.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The results of this study are consistent with prior research demonstrating the positive association between health literacy and quality of life (G. Y. Lee et al., 2022). Studies such as those conducted by Li et al. (2021) confirm that digital health literacy interventions can significantly enhance self-care behaviors and disease management, particularly among adults with chronic conditions(Li et al., 2021). These findings reinforce the notion that improving digital health literacy can empower individuals to make informed health decisions, ultimately leading to better health outcomes.

A key finding in this study is the impact of social and demographic factors on the effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions. Previous studies have identified disparities in health literacy based on education level, socioeconomic status, and age (Arriaga et al., 2022). For example, research by Gould et al. (Hwang et al., 2020) suggests that individuals with higher educational attainment are more likely to benefit from digital health literacy programs compared to those with lower education levels. This aligns with the findings in this study, which highlight the importance

of tailoring digital health interventions to diverse populations to ensure equitable access and impact.

Social support and motivation have also emerged as critical factors influencing the success of digital health literacy interventions. Studies such as those conducted by Witte et al. (Beni et al., 2022) emphasize the role of emotional and practical support in facilitating patient engagement with digital health programs. These findings suggest that interventions integrating peer support or community engagement components may be more effective in fostering sustained health literacy improvements.

Systemic Challenges Affecting Digital Health Literacy Interventions

Despite the potential benefits of digital health literacy interventions, several systemic barriers hinder their widespread adoption and effectiveness. One of the most significant challenges is the lack of technological infrastructure, particularly in low-resource settings. Limited access to reliable internet and digital devices restricts the reach of digital health interventions, exacerbating health disparities (Li et al., 2021). Addressing these infrastructural gaps is essential to ensuring that digital health literacy programs are accessible to all populations, regardless of geographic or socioeconomic status.

Another major challenge is the digital divide, which disproportionately affects older adults and individuals with low digital literacy. Studies have shown that older adults often face difficulties in adopting digital health tools due to a lack of familiarity with technology (Arriaga et al., 2022). Moreover, individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may not have access to the resources or training needed to effectively use digital health platforms. These disparities highlight the need for targeted digital literacy training programs to bridge the gap and enhance health equity (Christiansen et al., 2020).

Cultural and language barriers also play a role in limiting the effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions. Health information presented in digital formats must be culturally and linguistically appropriate to ensure that diverse populations can understand and apply the information provided (Vilela et al., 2022). Failure to consider cultural nuances in digital health education can result in lower engagement and reduced effectiveness of interventions.

Policy Implications and Recommendations

To maximize the benefits of digital health literacy interventions, policymakers must implement strategies that support digital health education and accessibility. One critical area for policy development is investment in digital infrastructure. Governments should prioritize expanding internet connectivity and ensuring that underserved populations have access to affordable digital devices. By addressing these infrastructural challenges, policymakers can create an enabling environment for the widespread adoption of digital health interventions (Visscher et al., 2018).

Education and training programs should be integrated into national health policies to improve digital health literacy across all age groups. Initiatives that provide digital literacy training for older adults and individuals with low socioeconomic status can help bridge the digital divide and enhance health equity (Arriaga et al., 2022). Furthermore, healthcare professionals should receive training

on digital health literacy to support patients in navigating online health resources and making informed decisions (Li et al., 2021).

Data privacy and security policies must also be strengthened to build trust in digital health interventions. Concerns about data security and confidentiality may deter individuals from using digital health tools, particularly in regions with weak data protection laws (Christiansen et al., 2020). Policymakers should establish clear guidelines on data privacy and implement safeguards to protect users' personal health information.

Collaborative efforts between government agencies, healthcare institutions, and technology developers are essential for the successful implementation of digital health literacy programs. Public-private partnerships can facilitate the development of user-friendly digital health tools and expand access to digital health education resources (Gaffari-fam et al., 2020). Policymakers should also encourage research and innovation in digital health literacy to identify best practices and optimize intervention strategies.

Future Research Directions

Although the existing literature provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of digital health literacy interventions, several areas warrant further exploration. Future research should focus on evaluating the long-term impact of digital health literacy programs on health outcomes and behavior change. While short-term improvements in health knowledge and self-care behaviors have been documented, there is limited evidence on whether these benefits are sustained over time (Beni et al., 2022). Longitudinal studies can provide a deeper understanding of the lasting effects of digital health literacy interventions.

Additionally, research should explore the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in personalizing digital health education. AI-driven interventions have the potential to tailor health information to individual needs, enhancing user engagement and comprehension (Du et al., 2022). Investigating the effectiveness of AI-powered digital health literacy programs can provide valuable insights into innovative approaches for improving health literacy.

Another critical area for research is the impact of digital health literacy interventions on health disparities. While digital tools offer the potential to improve access to health information, they may also exacerbate existing inequalities if not implemented inclusively (Alias et al., 2021). Future studies should examine strategies for reducing digital exclusion and ensuring that vulnerable populations benefit from digital health interventions.

Furthermore, more research is needed to assess the effectiveness of different digital health literacy models across various cultural contexts. Most existing studies focus on high-income countries, leaving a gap in knowledge regarding the applicability of these interventions in low- and middle-income settings (Parker et al., 2018). Conducting cross-cultural studies can help identify best practices for implementing digital health literacy programs in diverse populations.

Finally, future research should investigate the integration of digital health literacy interventions into routine healthcare services. Embedding digital literacy training within primary care and community health programs can enhance patient engagement and improve health outcomes

(Zipprich et al., 2021). Exploring strategies for integrating digital health literacy into healthcare systems can provide practical guidance for policymakers and healthcare providers.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the pivotal role of digital health literacy in promoting health knowledge, self care behaviors, and quality of life. To effectively translate these findings into practice, several strategic actions are recommended. Policymakers should prioritize the expansion of digital infrastructure in underserved areas and institutionalize digital health literacy training across healthcare and educational settings. Health practitioners must be equipped with the skills to guide patients through digital health platforms, ensuring inclusive access and usage. Researchers are encouraged to explore AI integrated, culturally adapted, and longitudinal intervention models to enhance engagement and sustainability. Collectively, these measures can bridge existing health disparities and position digital health literacy as a cornerstone of equitable and preventive public health strategies.

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