

Levels of Digital Health Literacy in Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Females in Regional Australia and its Association with Demographics

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Abstract : Background: Digital health platforms and digital health interventions are gaining increasing importance with the shift to online health-seeking behaviour, especially post-Covid. Subsequently, the importance of digital health literacy is increasingly being recognized. With the surge in culturally and linguistically diverse populations in First World countries, especially females, the predictors of digital health access in this population remain elusive. Keeping in view the inadequate digital infrastructure in rural and remote Australia, with lack of specialist services, the determinants of digital access gain even more importance. Objectives: The objective of this research are to measure the digital health literacy levels in this population, including the predictors of digital health literacy like sociodemographics and the correlation between the predictors and digital health literacy levels. Methods: A population-based quantitative survey was carried out in Regional Queensland from Jan 2022-Dec 2023 on culturally and linguistically diverse adult females. Sociodemographics like age, literacy levels, socioeconomic status, access to digital devices were recorded after informed consent. Digital health literacy levels were measured by specially designed questionnaires. The relationship between sociodemographics and digital health literacy levels was estimated by Pearson correlation. Results: Mean DHL was 2.66 ± 0.35 . There was a negative significant relationship ($p < 0.005$) between demographics like age and access to a digital device with digital health literacy levels. Also observed was a positive significant relationship between literacy levels and proficiency in English. Conclusion: Age, literacy levels and English proficiency are some of the highest predictors of digital health access. This is important because remote areas rely on digital health access due to less developed health infrastructure, including specialist services. Guide for Policy makers to focus on the populations most in need.

Keywords : digital health literacy, eHealth literacy, culturally and linguistically diverse, ethnic minorities, regional areas, rural and remote areas

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