

Everyday health information literacy in different populations



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The concept of health information literacy

Health information literacy = the set of abilities needed to recognise a health information need, identify likely information sources and use them to retrieve relevant information, assess the quality of the information and its applicability to a specific situation, and analyze, understand, and use the information to make good health decisions
(Medical Library Association, 2003)

Health literacy = an individual's capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions (National Research Council, 2004)



Information literacy = an the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information (ALA, 1989)



Everyday health information literacy

- ◉ The concept refers to competencies to find, evaluate, and understand health-related information in **everyday life situations**
- ◉ Health information = e.g., medical information, information on health conditions, information on health behaviour
- ◉ The concept is directed especially towards research among literate populations (Niemele *et al.* 2012)



The everyday health information literacy screening tool



The EHIL screening tool

- ◉ Designed by Niemelä and colleagues
- ◉ A test or “tool” for screening everyday health information literacy
- ◉ Based on self-assessment
- ◉ Aims at identifying individuals with limited everyday health information literacy
- ◉ Based on the MLA’s (2003) definition of HIL

Niemelä R, Ek S, Eriksson-Backa K & Huotari ML (2012) A screening tool for assessing everyday health information literacy. Libri: International Journal of Libraries and Information Services 62(2), 125–134.



Ten statements with response options from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

- ◉EHIL1. It is important to be informed about health issues.
- ◉EHIL2. I know where to seek health information.
- ◉EHIL3. I like to get health information from a variety of sources.
- ◉EHIL4. It is difficult to find health information from printed sources (magazines and books).
- ◉EHIL5. It is difficult to find health information from the Internet.
- ◉EHIL6. It is easy to assess the reliability of health information in printed sources (magazines and books).
- ◉EHIL7. It is easy to assess the reliability of health information on the Internet.
- ◉EHIL8. Health related terminology and statements are often difficult to understand.
- ◉EHIL9. I apply health related information to my own life and/or that of people close to me.
- ◉EHIL10. It is difficult to know who to believe in health issues.



Data collected with the EHIL screening tool

- ◉ Piloted with a survey (n = 217) in an upper secondary school in Finland (Niemelä et al. 2012)
- ◉ Further data collected from:
 - a population of young Finnish men (approx. 18 years old) in 2012 and 2013 (n = 1,870)
 - Finnish individuals with high risk for metabolic syndrome in 2013 and 2014 (n = 571)
 - Namibian students (n = 271), English version of the tool

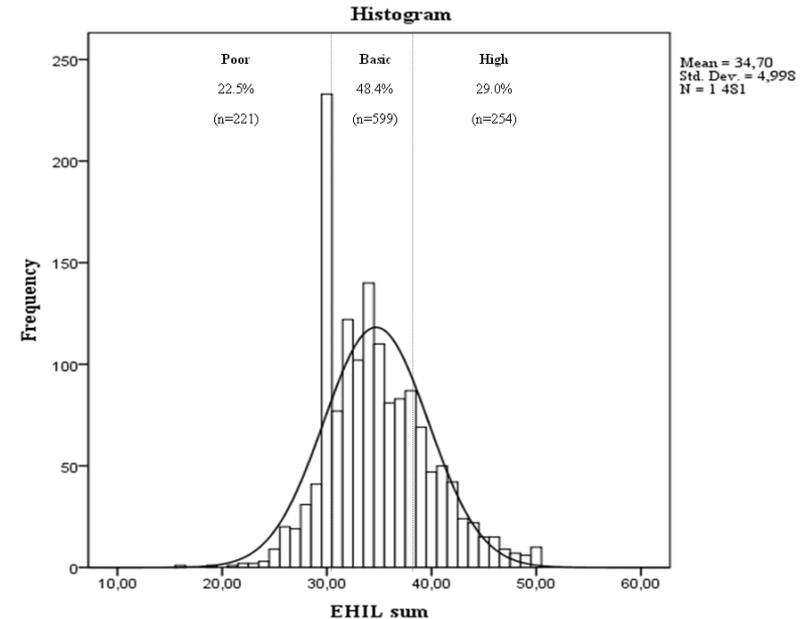


Results



EHIL scores

- ◉ We have used the EHIL screening tool scores in two ways:
 - As a sum variable score
 - As scores of individual statements
- ◉ The sum scores follow a normal distribution
- ◉ Categorisation based on the sum scores: poor, basic, and high EHIL



● EHIL, SES, and health

- Among young Finnish men, EHIL sum score (poor/medium/high) associated with
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Self-reported health promoting behaviors, and
 - Physical fitness and body composition





Comparison of EHIL across different groups

Mean (SD) EHIL scores in different populations

- Finnish students 36.8 (3.8)
- Finnish young men 34.7 (5.0)
- Finnish people with a high risk for metabolic syndrome 36.6 (4.6)
- Namibian students 36.4 (5.5)



The factorial structure of the EHIL screening tool

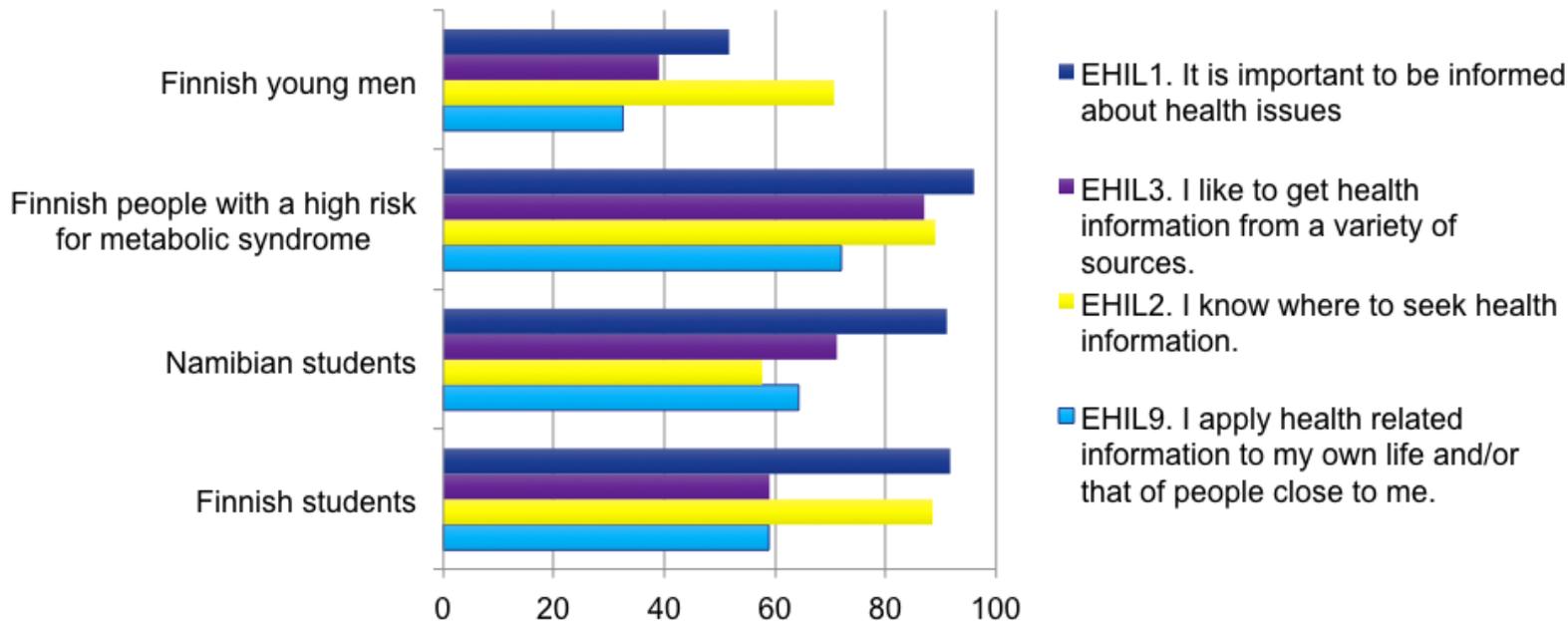
● **Motivation on
finding health
information**
(EHIL1, EHIL2,
EHIL3, EHIL9)

● **Confidence in
one's ability to find,
understand, and
use health
information**
(EHIL4, EHIL5,
EHIL8, EHIL10)

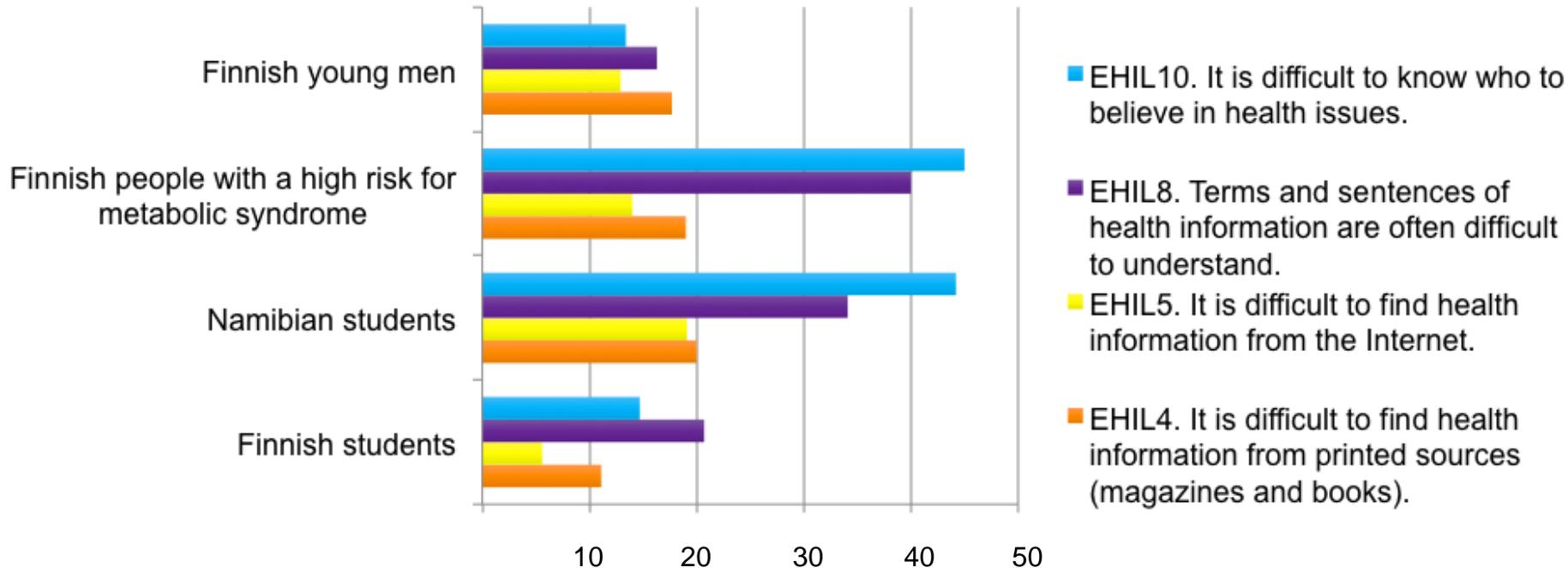
● **Evaluation of
health information**
(EHIL7, EHIL6)

MOTIVATION ON FINDING HEALTH INFORMATION

(percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement)

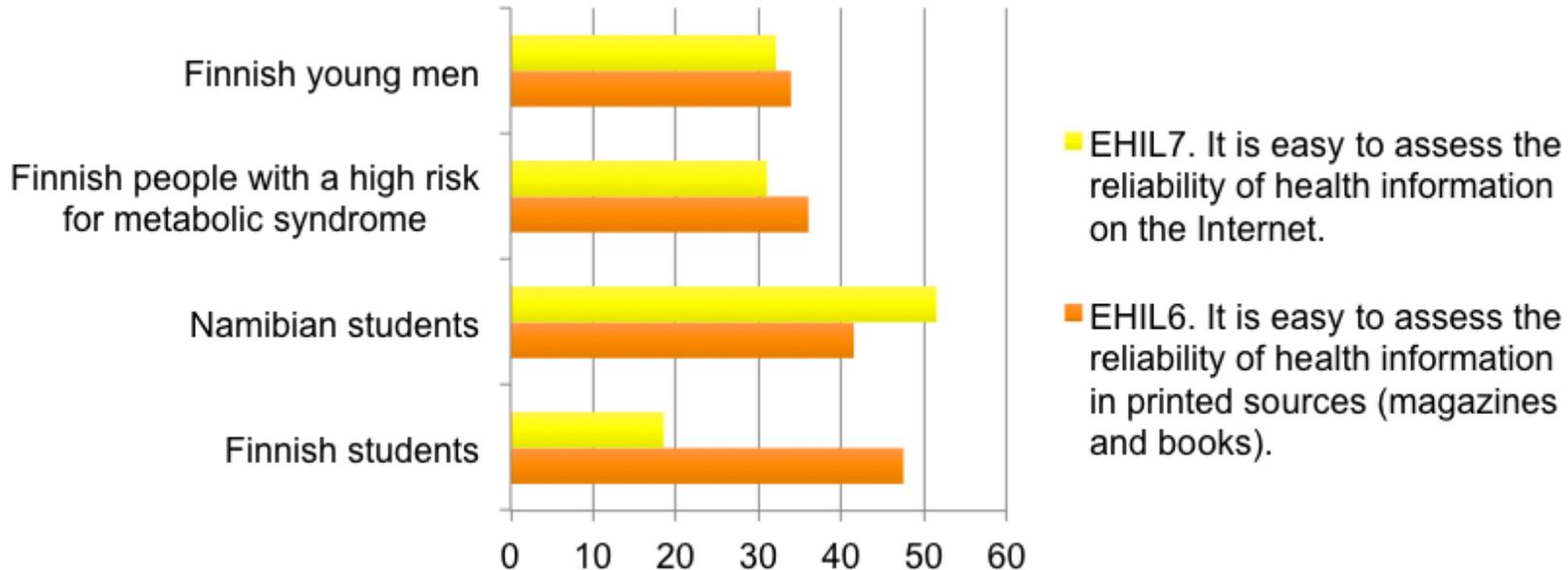


CONFIDENCE IN ONE'S ABILITY TO FIND, UNDERSTAND, AND USE HEALTH INFORMATION



EVALUATION OF HEALTH

INFORMATION (percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement)





Summary & future studies



Summary

- ⦿ Different factors of everyday health information literacy seem to be important in different populations:
 - People with high risk for metabolic syndrome and Namibian students: terminology & who to believe in health issues
 - Finnish young men: lack of motivation
 - Finnish upper secondary school students: assessing online health information
- ⦿ Although the screening tool may reflect confidence rather than 'actual' health information literacy skills, the scores are associated with various health behaviours & fitness among young men



Future studies

- ◉ A closer look into the different factors of everyday health information literacy

How are they connected with SES and health?

How they reflect more directly measurable skills?

- ◉ Translation to Swedish and study in relation to use of online medical records (DOME project)
- ◉ Translation and testing of the scale among German students (ZPID)
- ◉ Analysis of data collected from elderly people
- ◉ Further development of the EHIL screening tool



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Thanks!

*Any **questions** ?*

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