A Rapid Review of Digital Inclusion Strategies & Interventions for Vulnerable Populations

Background

- Migrant farmworkers in NC experience higher rates of depression and anxiety than other US states.\(^1\)
- Social isolation is a known contributor to poor mental health of migrant workers.\(^2\)
- Poor connectivity and cell service on farms worsens social isolation.
- Digital inclusion efforts show promise in improving mental and physical health of vulnerable populations like migrant farmworkers.\(^3\)
- Our team is conducting a RAPID REVIEW\(^4\) of digital inclusion interventions amongst vulnerable populations with the goals of:
  1. Examine the effectiveness and utility of digital inclusion interventions for vulnerable populations
  2. Review the outcomes of published strategies used to promote digital inclusion in vulnerable populations
  3. Identify & Suggest best practices for digital inclusion efforts based on data (qualitative or quantitative) of the included studies

Rapid Review Methodology

- **Initial Search**
  - MEDLINE via PubMed: 2924
  - Embase: 3980
  - Scopus: 1436
  - PsycINFO: 1649
  - Cochrane Central: 841
  - SocINDEX: 54
  - Total records to screen after deduplication: 8,346

- **Data Extraction**
  - A single reviewer extracts data using a data extraction form developed by the team.
  - A second reviewer checks for correctness and completeness.

- **Pilot Screening**
  - Team completes a pilot exercise of 30-50 abstracts for calibration.

- **Selection & Coding**
  - Location of study
  - Study participants
  - Description of intervention
  - Description of strategy
  - Outcomes in terms of effectiveness, utility, applicability, generalizability of intervention or strategy

- **Potential Impact**

  The impact of this rapid review is not directly handing technology into the hands of a migrant farmworker, but rather influencing the infrastructure for change in the long run by:

  1) Documenting and presenting research findings to legislators or the private sector that illustrate what the problem is as unbiased as possible

  2) Producing materials for farmworkers, farmers, community health workers, and public librarians to inform them on how to discuss digital inclusion efforts with broadband policymakers

  “We, at Laupus Library, believe that internet access should be a human right... this research will help us to find ways to close those gaps for the most vulnerable members of our society.”

  - Jamie Bloss, health sciences research librarian and associate professor at ECU.

Vulnerable Populations defined as:
- Racially/Ethnically minoritized populations
- Indigenous populations
- Populations living in medically underserved areas including rural and urban or settlements
- LGBTQIA+ populations
- Unhoused people
- Disabled people
- Older adults
- H2A / H2B migrant workers
- Those with limited English language proficiency
- Low socioeconomic status populations
- Refugee, migrant, and immigrant populations
- Medically uninsured populations

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References