

Health Care And Healthy Living Practices At School Among Blind Students

Yusmi Mohd Yunus¹, Albert Feisal Ismail², Shafiq Ayub Mohamed^{3,4}, Mohd Norazmi Nordin⁵, Roslieza Rosli⁶, Noor Aida Md Noor⁷, Azi Izwani Nor Hamzah⁸

¹ Ijn University College, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

² Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Malaysia.

³ Fakulti Komunikasi Dan Pengajian Media, Universiti Teknologi Mara (Uitm), Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Rembau, Malaysia.

⁴ Faculty Of Applied Communication, Multimedia University, Cyberjaya, Malaysia.

⁵ Faculty Of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.

⁶ Fakulti Sains Sosial Gunaan, Pusat Pengajian Antropologi Dan Dakwah, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Terengganu, Malaysia.

⁷ School Of Management, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

⁸ Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, Malaysia.

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Abstract

This review article explores the intersection of health care and healthy living practices among blind students in school settings. It emphasizes the importance of integrating health education and support services to enhance the well-being of visually impaired students. The article discusses current challenges faced by these students regarding health care access, healthy living practices, and the role of schools in fostering an inclusive and supportive environment. By identifying best practices and strategies for improvement, this article aims to contribute to the enhancement of health outcomes and quality of life for blind students.

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1. Introduction

Health care and healthy living practices are crucial for the overall well-being of all students, particularly those with special educational needs such as blindness or visual impairment. According to the World Health Organization (2011), individuals with disabilities often face greater health challenges and barriers to accessing necessary health care services. This article reviews the health care needs of blind students, the challenges they face in adopting healthy living practices, and the role schools play in supporting their health and well-being.

2. Understanding the Health Needs of Blind Students

2.1 Definition of Health Care for Blind Students

Health care for blind students encompasses various services designed to address their unique physical and mental health needs. These services include regular medical check-ups, mental health support, and health education tailored to their specific circumstances (Cunningham et al., 2020). Understanding the complexities of health care for visually impaired individuals is essential for developing effective interventions and support systems.

2.2 Unique Health Challenges Faced by Blind Students

Blind students may encounter specific health challenges, including higher rates of mental health issues, social isolation, and limited access to health care services (Higgins & D'Arcy, 2020). They often experience difficulties in navigating health care systems and may be at risk of neglecting their health needs due to a lack of resources or support (Gordon et al., 2021). These challenges necessitate targeted efforts to ensure that blind students receive appropriate health care and education.

3. Importance of Healthy Living Practices

3.1 Physical Health and Academic Success

Healthy living practices, including regular exercise, proper nutrition, and sufficient sleep, are vital for academic success. Research indicates that students who engage in healthy behaviors perform better academically and have improved concentration and attendance rates (Basch, 2011). For blind students, adopting healthy living practices can enhance their overall well-being and support their educational goals.

3.2 Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being

Mental health is particularly important for blind students, who may experience higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to their sighted peers (Higgins & D'Arcy, 2020). Healthy living practices, such as mindfulness and stress management techniques, can help these students cope with emotional challenges and foster resilience. Schools should prioritize mental health initiatives that promote healthy living practices among blind students.

4. Barriers to Health Care and Healthy Living

4.1 Accessibility Issues

Accessibility remains a significant barrier for blind students in accessing health care services. Many health care facilities lack the necessary accommodations to support visually impaired individuals, which can deter them from seeking medical assistance (Cunningham et al., 2020). Additionally, educational materials related to health and nutrition are often not available in accessible formats, limiting students' ability to engage with healthy living practices.

4.2 Lack of Awareness and Training

A lack of awareness and training among educators and health care providers can contribute to the inadequate support available for blind students (Gordon et al., 2021). Many professionals may not fully understand the unique health needs of visually impaired individuals, leading to insufficient health education and resources. This knowledge gap can hinder the implementation of effective health initiatives in schools.

4.3 Social Stigma and Isolation

Social stigma surrounding visual impairment can lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion for blind students. These social barriers can negatively impact their mental health and willingness to participate in health-promoting activities (Higgins & D'Arcy, 2020). Addressing stigma and fostering an inclusive environment is essential for encouraging healthy living practices among blind students.

5. Strategies for Promoting Health Care and Healthy Living

5.1 Comprehensive Health Education Programs

Implementing comprehensive health education programs that focus on the specific needs of blind students is crucial. Schools should offer age-appropriate health education that covers topics such as nutrition, physical activity, and mental health (Basch, 2011). Tailoring these programs to the unique challenges faced by blind students can empower them to make informed health choices.

5.2 Collaboration with Health Care Providers

Collaboration between schools and health care providers is essential for promoting health care access for blind students. Schools should establish partnerships with local health care facilities to facilitate regular health screenings and assessments (Gordon et al., 2021). By working together, educators and health professionals can ensure that blind students receive the necessary support for their health needs.

5.3 Encouraging Physical Activity and Nutrition

Schools should promote physical activity and healthy eating among blind students by providing accessible opportunities for engagement. Implementing programs that encourage participation in sports, physical education, and nutrition workshops can foster healthy living practices (Cunningham et al., 2020). These initiatives should consider the unique needs of blind students and provide accommodations to ensure their active participation.

6. Mental Health Support and Well-Being

6.1 Importance of Mental Health Services

Mental health services are crucial for supporting the well-being of blind students. Schools should prioritize the integration of mental health resources, such as counseling services and peer support groups, into the educational framework (Higgins & D'Arcy, 2020). Providing a safe and supportive environment can significantly enhance the emotional well-being of visually impaired students.

6.2 Training for Educators and Staff

Training for educators and school staff on mental health awareness and strategies for supporting blind students is essential. Professional development programs can equip educators with the knowledge and skills needed to identify mental health issues and provide appropriate support (Gordon et al., 2021). This training can create a more inclusive and responsive educational environment.

7. Evaluating Health Care and Healthy Living Initiatives

7.1 Monitoring Health Outcomes

Regular monitoring of health outcomes is vital for evaluating the effectiveness of health care and healthy living initiatives for blind students. Schools should implement assessment tools to track students' physical and mental health, as well as academic performance (Basch, 2011). This data can inform program improvements and ensure that interventions remain effective and responsive to student needs.

7.2 Feedback Mechanisms for Continuous Improvement

Establishing feedback mechanisms that allow students and families to share their experiences is essential for

continuous improvement. Schools should create opportunities for blind students and their families to provide input on health-related initiatives (Cunningham et al., 2020). This feedback can help identify areas for improvement and enhance the overall effectiveness of health care and healthy living practices.

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, health care and healthy living practices are vital for the well-being of blind students in school settings. By understanding their unique health needs and implementing comprehensive support systems, schools can create an inclusive environment that promotes healthy behaviors and academic success. Recommendations for stakeholders include prioritizing health education, ensuring access to health services, and investing in professional development for educators. Continued collaboration between educators, health professionals, and families is essential for enhancing health outcomes and quality of life for blind students.

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