

Peer Review Report

Review Report on Understanding the effects of social cohesion on social wellbeing: a scoping review

Review, Int J Public Health

Reviewer: Reviewer 1

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EVALUATION

Q 1 Please summarize the main theme of the review.

This manuscript presents an interesting review of evidence on the topic of social cohesion and health and wellbeing. Though this is a topic that has been explored, it is one that remains highly subjective and therefore difficult to track and measure for the purposes of research. Therefore, this type of review can add value to the field in providing examples of how such concepts can be operationalized to explore connections to wellbeing.

Q 2 Please highlight the limitations and strengths.

In general, review is concise well-written. It may benefit from a sharper pass at describing the narrative for the entire paper. Having a consistent narrative throughout could improve the readability of the paper and can make it more effective in communicating the key findings from the review. Please see my comments below for more specific feedback on the different components of the manuscript.

Q 3 Please provide your detailed review report to the authors, structured in major and minor comments.

Minor Comments

Abstract

Comment 1: in the sentence that states "Evidence suggests that sufficient facilitation through facilities and services improve social relations and wellbeing and create more cohesive communities", it is clear what is meant here by "facilitation" by "facilities" and by "services". More specificity on these terms is needed to understand what the result here is.

Comment 2: The following sentence: "Social cohesion is related to underpinning community resilience and suggests that social connectedness at community level protects vulnerable groups from poor mental health and wellbeing", saying that social cohesion is related to underpinning community resilience is a bit confusing. Did the authors mean to say instead that social cohesion is a key underpinning for community resilience?

Contribution to the field

Comment 3: In the first sentence in this section, what is meant by "social care"?

Comment 4: In the third sentence, I suggest switching out variously with commonly, and then the "commonly" in the second part of the sentence can be replaced with "typically".

Introduction

Comment 5: Lines 46–48, I'm not sure that I agree with the fact that social relations necessarily reflect the acceptance of diversity as a local phenomenon, particularly in the case of highly homogenous settings. Also, there's no citation here in this sentence, so I wasn't quite sure where this notion was drawn from.

Comment 6: Is the corresponding citation for everything from lines 46–53 the same source, or should there be additional sources cited in those lines throughout?

Comment 7: In line 56, there is mention of 3 key components of social cohesion, and it is not clear what those three components are. If this is mentioned, the components should also be described.

Methods

Comment 8: In line 68 the authors use the word "results". This has relatively specific implications in terms of the types of studies and methodologies, since it implies a causal relationship rather than an association. Was this the intention, or should this instead be "is associated with" rather than "results in"?

Comment 9: In the Exclusion Criteria, it is interesting to note that specific studies of children or older adults were excluded. There is no real explanation as to why that is the case, and I would argue that they are important groups to consider, particularly considering what it means for older adults to age in place as their neighborhoods may be changing and the impact on intergenerational cohesion this may have. It would be helpful to understand why the authors made this decision and similarly for the exclusion criterion relating to overtly referencing loneliness as a subjective experience of wellbeing.

Results

Comment 10: Lines 107–112 the language used in this paragraph again implies some level of causality, so I just wanted to flag because this would require that the studies used to make these conclusions had research designs that would allow for making causal inferences. Same comment for lines 123 and 125.

Comment 11: Line 140 is missing a period.

Comment 12: In the section on Connections with place and person, there is no mention of connections when a place experiences changes and what that does to connections, as that may impact people living in those spaces and have implications for aspects of health and wellbeing that has also been explored in the literature.

Conclusion

Comment 13: In general, the conclusions do not seem to connect very well with the rest of the paper. There is new information introduced at the end of the conclusions that is useful but is not reflected in the Results section, and this makes me wonder where that information came from and whether it should be incorporated in that section as well.

References

Comment 14: Was there a limit on allowed citations? Particularly for a review paper, the list of references seems thin.

PLEASE COMMENT

Q 4 Does the reference list cover the relevant literature adequately and in an unbiased manner?

The reference list is quite thin, so I wondered whether there was a limitation on the number of references the manuscript could cite. If there is no limitation, then I feel the authors should include many more citations for the various concepts described throughout the paper.

Q 5 Does this manuscript refer only to published data? (unpublished data is not allowed for Reviews)

Yes.

Q 6 Does the manuscript cover the issue in an objective and analytical manner

Yes.

Q 7 Was a review on the issue published in the past 12 months?

No.

Q 8 Does the review have international or global implications?

Yes.

Q 9 Is the title appropriate, concise, attractive?

It's unclear whether the title is appropriate due to the use of the word "effect". This implies that the evidence presented in the manuscript is causal in nature, but there is no discussion of this in the manuscript to confirm this, so I hesitate to say that this word is appropriate for the title of the manuscript.

Q 10 Are the keywords appropriate?

Yes

Q 11 Is the English language of sufficient quality?

Yes

Q 12 Is the quality of the figures and tables satisfactory?

Not Applicable.

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Q 13 Quality of generalization and summary



Q 14 Significance to the field



Q 15 Interest to a general audience



Q 16 Quality of the writing



REVISION LEVEL

Q 17 Please take a decision based on your comments:

Major revisions.