

A Review Study of the Concept of Mental Health

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ABSTRACT Mental health as a concept is used widely without attempts to specify its idiosyncratic meaning. The objective of the review was to systematically examine existing research to answer the question: *What is mental health?* The data and method included academic databases, websites, and archives. A search was conducted for strings describing “mental health OR “mental illness” OR “mental disorder” OR “psychosocial wellbeing” OR “psychosocial functioning” and the resulting literature reviewed for the definition, description or explanation of the concept mental health. The review found that the definition of mental health in the relevant literature varies from theoretical prescriptions to descriptive and simple phrases that viewed mental health through the lens of the medical and psychosocial models of health and disease. The lack of consensus on the definition of mental health in the extant literature, makes understanding the concept of mental health very challenging. Recommendations for a standardised definition of mental health that would inform policy and legislation are proposed.