

INPLASY

Exploited for Sectoral Sustainability: A systematic review on the examination of the effects of hazardous conditions faced by migrant seasonal farmworkers in agriculture on their health-related quality of life

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ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Support - This research received no external funding or sponsorship.

Review Stage at time of this submission - The review has not yet started.

Conflicts of interest - None declared.

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Amendments - This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 13 May 2026 and was last updated on 13 May 2026.

INTRODUCTION

Review question / Objective What are the effects of hazardous working and living conditions on the health-related quality of life (HRQoL) of migrant seasonal farmworkers in agriculture? Using the PICOS framework: Population—migrant seasonal farmworkers; Intervention—exposure to hazardous work and living conditions; Comparator—farmworkers with less exposure, documented vs. undocumented status, or country/regional differences; Outcomes—validated HRQoL measures; Study design—empirical, peer-reviewed studies.

Rationale The labor dimension of sustainable agriculture is often overlooked, despite migrant seasonal farmworkers being essential to food production. These workers frequently endure hazardous conditions, yet the health-related quality of life (HRQoL) impacts remain under-synthesized in the literature. By systematically reviewing

studies using validated HRQoL instruments, this review addresses a critical gap, informing both policy and practice for advancing social, environmental, and economic sustainability in agriculture. Addressing this knowledge gap is vital for developing effective interventions and labor protections.

Condition being studied This review focuses on health-related quality of life (HRQoL) among migrant seasonal farmworkers employed in agriculture. It examines how hazardous working and living conditions—such as exposure to pesticides, extreme temperatures, poor housing, long work hours, and inadequate legal protection— affect physical, mental, and social well-being as measured by validated HRQoL instruments. Migrant seasonal agricultural workers of any age, gender, or ethnicity, employed in crop or livestock production, who are assessed for HRQoL using validated measurement tools.

METHODS

Search strategy A systematic search will be conducted in PubMed (MEDLINE), Scopus, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect, from inception to December 31, 2025. Search strings will use combinations of keywords and subject headings for “farmworkers”, “agricultural”, “picker”, “harvester”, “seasonal”, “migrants”, “conditions”, and “health-related quality of life”. Boolean operators and filters (English, peer-reviewed, up to 2025/12/31) will be applied.

Participant or population Migrant seasonal agricultural workers of any age, gender, or ethnicity, employed in crop or livestock production, who are assessed for HRQoL using validated measurement tools.

Intervention Exposure to hazardous working and living conditions in agriculture, including chemical/pesticide exposure, poor housing, long hours, low wages, lack of legal protections, and limited access to healthcare.

Comparator Comparisons may include farmworkers with less hazardous exposure, local/native farmworkers, or groups distinguished by documentation status, gender, or country.

Study designs to be included Peer-reviewed empirical studies: cross-sectional, longitudinal, comparative, or qualitative et al. studies using validated HRQoL instruments.

Eligibility criteria Inclusion: Empirical, peer-reviewed studies in English, published up to December 31, 2025, assessing HRQoL among migrant agricultural workers with validated tools. Exclusion: studies on non-migrant or non-agricultural populations, reviews, conference abstracts, studies not reporting HRQoL, or not using HRQoL validated instruments.

Information sources Electronic databases: PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and ScienceDirect.

Main outcome(s) Primary outcome is health-related quality of life (HRQoL) among migrant seasonal farmworkers, measured by validated instruments (e.g., SF-12, SF-36, WHOQOL-BREF).

Additional outcome(s) Prevalence of specific health conditions (musculoskeletal, dermatological, respiratory, psychological), work-related injury rates, access to healthcare, and relevant demographic or socioeconomic correlates.

Data management Study selection, data extraction, and management will be conducted independently by two reviewers using a piloted extraction form. Discrepancies will be resolved by consensus or third-party adjudication. Records will be managed in Excel.

Quality assessment / Risk of bias analysis The methodological quality and risk of bias of included studies will be evaluated using established appraisal tools appropriate to each study design. Assessment will be conducted independently by two reviewers, with any disagreements resolved through discussion or involving a third reviewer if necessary.

Strategy of data synthesis A narrative synthesis will be performed due to heterogeneity in study designs and outcomes. Results will be tabulated and thematically analyzed.

Subgroup analysis If data permit, subgroup analyses will be conducted by country or region, gender, legal status (documented vs. undocumented), type of agricultural work, or age group.

Sensitivity analysis Sensitivity analyses will be undertaken by excluding studies at high risk of bias, by study design or language, or by other critical methodological factors to assess the robustness of the findings.

Language restriction Yes, only articles published in English will be included.

Country(ies) involved Greece.

Other relevant information Equal contributions: all authors contributed to conceptualization, methodology, analysis, and writing. The protocol follows PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

Keywords migrant farmworkers; seasonal agricultural workers; labor exploitation; occupational health; working conditions; social vulnerability; labor rights; health; quality of life.

Dissemination plans Findings will be published in a peer-reviewed journal, presented at conferences, and shared with stakeholders and policymakers via policy briefs and academic presentations.

Contributions of each author

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