

Welcome

Understanding Research & Critical Appraisal

Part 6: Qualitative Studies

Jan. 28/08, 10:00-11:00

Please keep your phone on mute until you are ready to ask questions.

How?

- Press the “mute” button on your phone
- If your phone does not have a mute button, then press *6 to mute your phone, and *6 to un-mute.



SENIORS HEALTH RESEARCH TRANSFER NETWORK

Linking Caregivers, Researchers & Policy Makers

Quantitative and Qualitative Research

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What I'll Cover:

★ The different traditions

🕒 Some qualitative research methods

🕒 How these differ from “clinical practice”

🕒 Why they're useful

🕒 How the techniques can be combined

Two Different Traditions

 Scientific

 Philosophical

 Epistemological

Quantitative Research

 Grew out of “hard” sciences

 Physics

 Astronomy

 etc.

 Adopted by those with physics envy

 Psychology

 Medicine

 Economics

Quantitative Research

 Emphasis on:

 Precision in measurement

 Reproducibility of results

 Behaviour seen as conglomerate of variables

 Objectivity of researcher

Qualitative Research

 Arose in Anthropology, Sociology, and Psychiatry

 Adopted by those with more “holistic” orientation:





 History

 Education

 Nursing

Qualitative Research

 Emphasis on:


-  Subjectivity -- meaning and interpretation exists only in minds of people
-  Whole is greater than sum of parts
-  No one “correct” answer
-  Researcher intrinsic part of process

The Tensions

-  Quantitative researchers may see qualitative researchers as soft and unscientific
-  Qualitative researchers may see quantitative researchers as reductionistic and missing global picture
-  Little communication or collaboration

Some Qualitative Methods

 Not exhaustive list

 Those most applicable to medicine and
psychiatry

Focus Groups

 Discussion with 6-10 people

 Usually two researchers:

 One to lead group


 One to record process

 Topic chosen by researcher

Advantages of Focus Groups

 Efficient

 Participants feel safe and comfortable

 Comments of one person may stimulate ideas in others

 Can yield broad, rich exploration of topic

Disadvantages of Focus Groups

 One person may dominate group

 Minority views may be suppressed

 Issues of composition:

 Homogeneous?

 Heterogeneous?

In-Depth Interviews

 Can range from informal/unstructured to formal/semi-structured

 Open-ended

 Flexible

Problems

 Interviews should be transcribed

 Should be supplemented by field notes

 Labour and time intensive

Ethnographic Research

- ✎ Used primarily by cultural anthropologists (e.g., Mead, Kluckhohn)
- ✎ Researcher immersed in culture for extended periods of time
- ✎ Used to understand acculturation of medical students

Participant Observation

- ✎ Researcher observes group in naturalistic setting and in “real time”
- ✎ Can range from passive observation to active participation
- ✎ Extends over time
- ✎ Marked by communication and participation



Advantages of P-O

 Trust in researcher increases over time

 Researcher understands ways which group thinks and feels


 Reactivity of researcher reduced

Disadvantages of P-O

-  Researcher may identify too closely with group
-  Ethical concerns if group involved in illegal activities

Textual and Discourse Analysis

 Analysis of written and verbal material

 Often used in historical research (e.g., diaries, legal documents)

 Used to analyze public documents

Methodological Issues

 Sampling

 Sample size

 Timing of data analysis

Differences in Sampling Strategies

Quantitative

Random

Dictated by theory

Required by statistics

Pre-determined

Qualitative

Purposive

Dynamic

Purposive Sampling Strategies

 Random

 Snowball sampling

 Key informants

 Extreme cases

Sample Size

 Informational redundancy

 Saturation of concepts

 Requires on-going data analysis

Assuring Data Quality

 Triangulation:

 By person

 By method

 By time

 By site


Combining Traditions:

 Qualitative before quantitative

 Simultaneous

 Quantitative before qualitative

Qualitative Before Quantitative:

 Used when quantitative methods desired, but scope of area is unclear

 Increasing use in scale development

 Unsure of where to intervene

Simultaneous

 Used to gather different types of data

 Effects of environmental hazards

 Survey of attitudes, reactions

 Focus groups of local inhabitants

 Interviews with key informants

 Analysis of newspaper articles

Quantitative Before Qualitative

 Used to explain results of surveys

 Reasons for answers sometimes unclear

 Unexpected patterns

 Example -- adaptation to hazards

Practical Issues

- ✎ Requires mutual respect among researchers
- ✎ Must learn from each other
- ✎ Jargon must be minimized
- ✎ Must make concessions
- ✎ Must decide how results will be combined (e.g., to triangulate, to provide different perspectives)

Advantages

 Can combine positive aspects of both approaches:

 Representativeness of survey sample

 In-depth understanding of responses

 Richer, fuller description of phenomenon

Thank you

Please complete an evaluation of today's session.
Open the following URL in your browser:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=OyzFW7zV7VjBVR44HEuGyw_3d_3d

From Dr. Streiner, the Seniors Health Research Transfer Network (SHRTN) and Baycrest, thank you for your participation in this series.



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