

Qualitative Health Research Methods

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Objectives

- Describe qualitative health research (QHR) as a distinct methodological discipline
- List the characteristics and focal domains of qualitative health research
- Reflect on the utility and value of qualitative health research findings within the context of evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM)
- Compose an overarching QHR question using the EPPiC framework
- Describe the characteristics of four unique QHR designs:
 - Fundamental qualitative description
 - Case study
 - Interpretive description
 - Focused ethnography
- Define purposeful sampling
- List common strategies used to collect data in qualitative studies



What is Qualitative Health Research?

Quantitative

Qualitative

Mixed Methods

Research Paradigms

In Canada Uptake of HPV Vaccine Falls Short of >80% Immunization Target



	Quantitative Research Paradigm <i>Positivism/Post-Positivism</i>	Qualitative Research Paradigm <i>Constructivism</i>
Ontology	Naïve realism – belief in the existence of a ‘real’ reality.	Relativist – belief in multiple realities in the form of mental constructions; reality is dependent on the individual.
Epistemology	Objectivity – belief in an unbiased (probable) truth; knowledge is the understanding and control over nature.	Subjectivity – belief that people construct their own understanding of reality; knowledge is socially constructed not discovered; research findings are co-constructed between researcher and participant.
Methodology	Hypothetical-deductive inquiry – belief in the scientific method and values data that can be replicated.	Inductive/interpretive – approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods e.g., entering real-world setting to observe, interact, and understand.
Axiology	Value free – belief in a distant researcher so as not to influence the laws produces by inquiry; biases need to be controlled.	Values honoured – values need to be understood and are inseparable from the inquiry and outcomes.
Researcher position	“Disinterested” scientist; focus on the parts.	Co-constructor of knowledge, understanding and meaning of participant experience; focus on the whole.
Rhetoric	Subjects, objectivity, reliability, validity, replication, prediction, control.	Participants, subjectivity, authenticity, trustworthiness, understanding, reflexivity.
Questions’ aims	Empirical generalizations across time and space.	In-depth, contextually sensitive understandings of human or social phenomena.

QHR ASSUMPTION & QUESTION	IMPLICATIONS for QHR RESEARCHER
Ontological: What is the nature of reality?	Subjective, multiple reality; as seen by participants Use quotes, themes in participants' words; evidence of different perspectives
Epistemological : What is the relationship between the researcher & research focus?	Collaborator; spend time "in the field"; insider; researcher as instrument
Axiological: What is the role of values?	Acknowledge & discuss values /bias
Rhetorical: What is the language of research?	Engaging narrative; may use first person; use of qualitative terms (i.e., participants, interpretations, transferability)
Methodological: What is the process of research?	Inductive logic; emergent design Particulars before generalizations; detailed description of context

Defining Qualitative Research

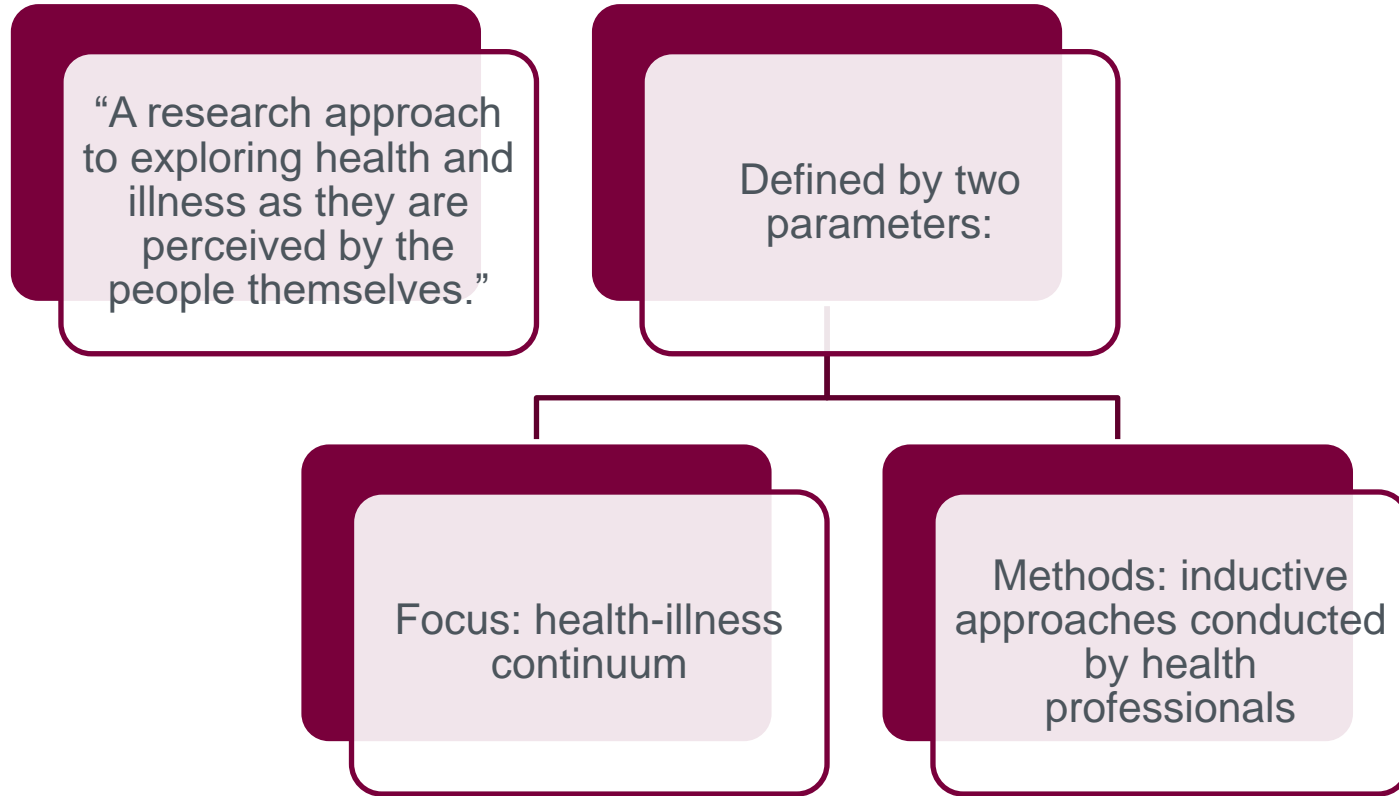
“Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem.

The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.” (p. 15)

Qualitative Health Research: A Novel Discipline



Defining Qualitative Health Research



Qualitative Health Research: Domains



IDENTIFICATION OF
HEALTH NEEDS



EXAMINATION OF
PROCESSES OF
ACCESSING HEALTH
CARE



EXPLORATION OF THE
THE ILLNESS/HEALTH
EXPERIENCE



TRAJECTORIES OF
RECOVERY FROM
ILLNESS, LIVING WITH A
DISABILITY (PHYSICAL OR
MENTAL)

Qualitative Health Research: Domains



BEHAVIOURS AND
EXPERIENCES OF
CARE PROVIDERS



EXAMINATION OF THE
HEALTH CARE
PROFESSIONS



HEALTH CARE
EVALUATION, POLICY,
& PROGRAM
DEVELOPMENT



IMPLEMENTATION
SCIENCE



DESCRIBING
CONTEXTS OF CARE

Qualitative Health Research: Goals



Describe meaning and experience



Determine characteristics



Recognize patterns and trajectories



Explain and generalize using concepts or theories



Enhance methods of professional education and person-focused teaching
(patients, clients, family members, other caregivers)



Explore policy, practice, and program development and efficacy



Identify, describe and evaluate interventions



Develop, refine, advance qualitative methods for QHR



The Purpose Statement

Qualitative Purpose Statement

Include language that alludes to:

- Study function/purpose (explore, describe, explain, understand)
- Nature of the problem/central phenomenon
- Design
- Participants, context

Outline the issue

The purpose of this qualitative (add design) study is to (explore, discover, understand, explain) (central phenomenon) of /for (participants) at/in (site/, context)

Explain value, benefit, use



Long-term home visiting with vulnerable young mothers: an interpretive description of the impact on public health nurses

Anne L. Dmytryshyn^{1*}, Susan M. Jack², Marilyn Ballantyne³, Olive Wahoush³ and Harriet L. MacMillan⁴

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the nature of the challenges and perceived benefits experienced by all PHNs working in the NFP program in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada and to explore what was needed to effectively deliver the program. Strategies are needed to support the PHNs who deliver important and successful programs like the NFP, however current literature does not capture the unique challenges of nurse home visiting with a complex population of high-risk, young mothers in their home environment. For an intervention to be meaningful and effective the nature of the problem, what providers need and what is currently being done in the practice environment must be described.

Description & Exploration

Activity Sheet: Domains of Qualitative Health Research



- “Patient care is more than just healing – it’s building a connection that encompasses mind, body and soul. If you could stand in someone else’s shoes...hear what they hear. See what they see. Feel what they feel. Would you treat them differently?” (Cosgrove, 2013, Cleveland Clinic)
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDDWvj_q-08

Empathy Video: Discussion



What research questions did this video inspire you to write down? Which QHR domain does this fit within?

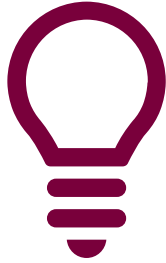


Who's perspective is it important to explore and understand? Why?



Why would it be important to answer this question?

The “Utility” of Qualitative Evidence



Conceptual

Provides insight

Provides a new perspective

Deepens our understanding



Instrumental

Program evaluation

Identification of barriers/facilitators

Formative work to develop new innovations, measures, interventions

Case Scenario

Doctors and residents leave St. Joe's psych ER over safety concerns

Three psychiatrists and all residents have left St. Joseph's Healthcare's psychiatric emergency department due to safety concerns.

NEWS Apr 11, 2019 by Susan Clairmont The Hamilton Spectator

f t r in e



Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons has repeatedly said St. Joe's must make a number of changes to the psych ER at the site on



Crafting EPPiC Qualitative Health Research Questions

EPPiC Framework

Development of Overarching Qualitative Health Research Questions



EMPHASIS



PURPOSEFUL
SAMPLE

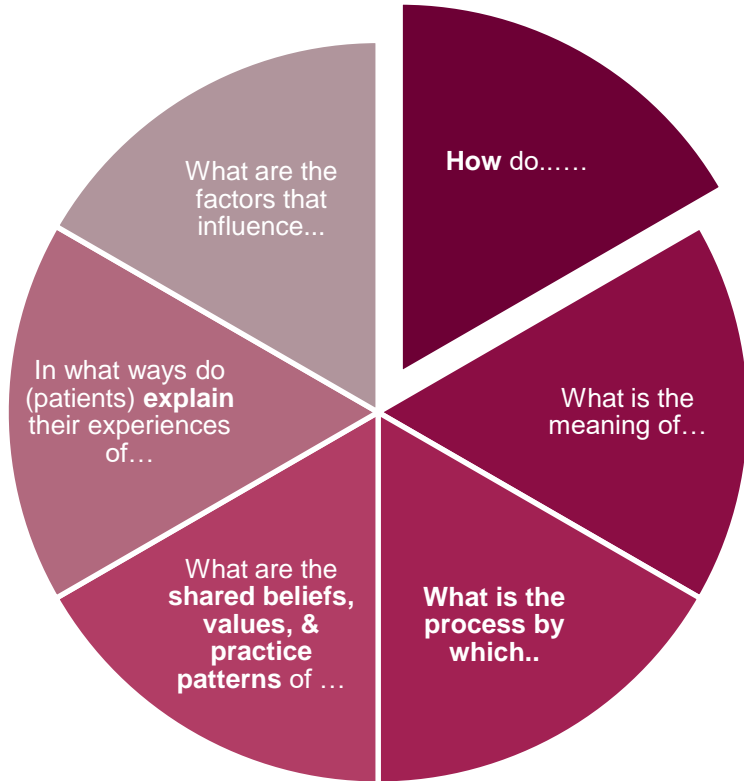


PHENOMENON
OF **I**NTEREST



CONTEXT

Emphasis



- Reveals specific type of qualitative question & includes coded language associated with a specific qualitative design

Alludes to function (purpose) of study:

Descriptive – what?

Exploratory – how?

Explanatory –why?

Coded Language

Design	Coded Language
Grounded theory	What is the basic social psychological problem ... What is the basic social psychological process to.. What is the process of (gerund).... How do....
Phenomenology	What is the lived experience of... What is the meaning of....
Case study	What is Why.... How do...
Focused ethnography	What are the shared beliefs, values, and practice patterns of...
Interpretive description	In what ways do (sample) explain their experiences with (issue) in (context)
Fundamental description	What are the factors that influence..

Purposeful Sample

Considerations

- Explore the health/illness experience from “who’s” perspective”
- How many different perspectives? Single? Multiple?
- Increased heterogeneity or homogeneity will influence sample size estimate

What are the different ways in which **nurses** experience patient-initiated violence in the workplace?

Among **full-time, registered nurses working in an emergency department**, what are their experiences of patient-initiated violence in south-west Ontario urban, acute care hospitals?

How does the culture of an emergency department, in downtown Toronto influence **health care providers’** responses to patient-initiated violence in the workplace?

Phenomenon of interest



Delineates a specific topic, & specifically the health/illness (social) phenomenon to be examined within the study



Values, beliefs, perceptions, experiences of health, illness, health care treatment, program, services



Process, activities (gerund)



Adoption, uptake, delivery, implementation ofpolicy, program, research study

Context

Considerations

- The physical, social, geographic, developmental, political “conditions” in which the phenomenon of interest occurs or is influenced by.
- Context and “site of recruitment” not always the same

What are the different ways in which nurses experience patient-initiated violence in the **workplace**?

Among full-time, registered nurses working in an emergency department, what are their experiences of patient-initiated violence in **south-west Ontario urban, acute care hospitals**?

How does the culture of an **emergency department, in downtown Toronto** influence health care providers’ responses to patient-initiated violence in the workplace?

Putting it all together

How do full-time, registered nurses respond to patient-initiated violence within emergency departments located within large, urban hospitals in south-west Ontario?

In what ways do intoxicated, adult males (ages 18-50 years) explain their verbal and physical violence towards health care professionals upon admission to an emergency department in urban Ontario hospitals?

How do health care providers working within specialized mental health emergency units across Canada respond to all forms of patient and family initiated violence?

Qualitative Health Research: Designs for applied health research



Every
question has
a proper
design...



Qualitative Description



Qualitative Description



Purpose: To provide a rich description of individuals experiences of a social or human phenomenon in accessible language



Useful when information is required directly from those experiencing the phenomenon



Pragmatic approach – often used when time & resources may be limited and in-depth interpretation not required

EPPiC Overarching Research Question

What are psychiatrists' perceptions of the factors that influence the establishment and maintenance of a safe working environment in Ontario urban psychiatric emergency departments?



Emphasis

“What”

Identify and describe the factors that influence safety
Focus on the who, what, where and why



Purposeful Sample

Psychiatric residents
Psychiatrists



Context

Urban psychiatric emergency departments in Ontario



Phenomenon of Interest

Establishment and
Maintenance of a safe
Working environment

Case Study



EPPiC Overarching Research Question: Single Case Study

For staff, patients, and family members, how do unsafe working conditions influence the delivery of care and treatment in St. Joseph's Psychiatric Emergency Room in Hamilton, Ontario?



Emphasis

Exploration /Explanation
How or Why?



Purposeful Sample

Staff (Psychiatrists, RNs, Security, Paramedics), Patients (voluntary/involuntary admission), Department/Hospital Administration



Context

St. Joseph's Psychiatric Emergency Room (Charlton Avenue), Hamilton Ontario



Phenomenon of Interest

Unsafe emergency department environments/working conditions on level of care

Focused Ethnography



EPPiC Overarching Research Question: Focused Ethnography

What are the shared beliefs, values, and experiences of individuals who are “involuntarily formed” and brought to urban, emergency departments for mental health assessment and treatment?



Emphasis

To describe a shared culture



Purposeful Sample

Individuals, with a mental health condition, who have been “involuntarily” formed, and “brought” to ED



Context

Urban, emergency departments



Phenomenon of Interest

Mental health assessment and treatment

Interpretive Description



EPPiC Overarching Research Question: Interpretive Description

What can be learned about moral distress in emergency department care from the perspective of health care professionals who provide care to individuals with mental illness, including substance misuse?



Emphasis

To explore and understand



Purposeful Sample

Health care professionals



Context

Urban, emergency departments



Phenomenon of Interest

Moral distress



Purposeful Sampling

Inclusion criteria (criterion sampling)



Who is in... and who is out ..for each “data source”



The inclusion criteria for this study include:

Participant must have taught or co-taught a lecture or course for the EBN Masters between 2007-2019

At the time of the course, the educator must have resided outside of Italy

Speak and understand English

Principles of Purposeful Sampling

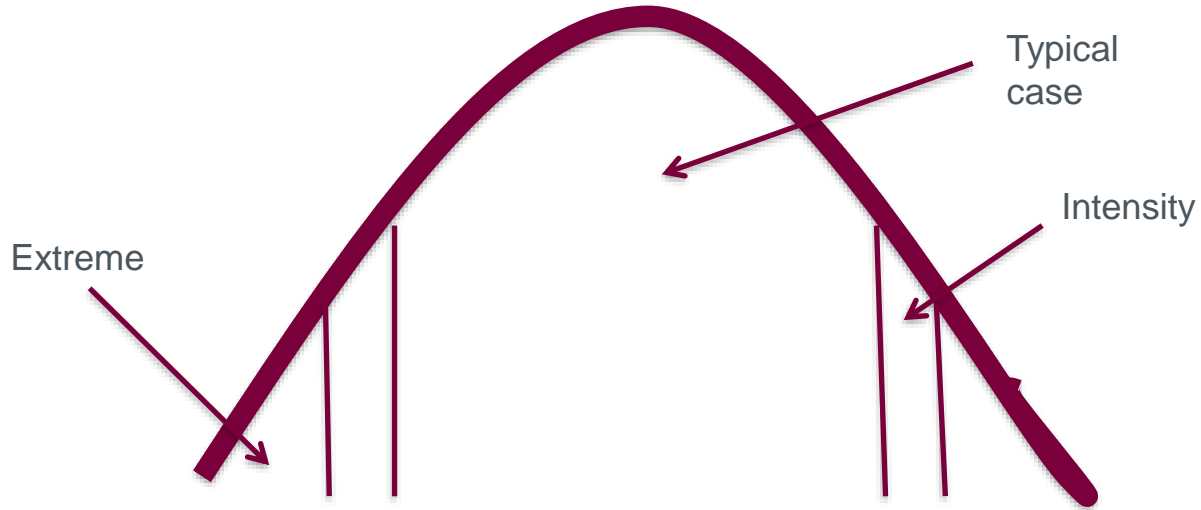
Selection of individuals/groups especially knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomena of interest

Available, willing, and able to communicate experiences, beliefs, perceptions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner

Purposeful Sampling Strategies

Criterion	Extreme/deviant case	Intensity	Maximum variation
Homogenous	Typical case	Stratified purposeful	Critical case
Theoretical sampling	Confirming/disconfirming cases	Random purposeful	Sampling politically important cases

Extreme, Intensity, Typical



Recruitment & Sampling



Snowball/chain sampling



Opportunistic sampling



Convenience sampling

Sample Size: It depends!

What you want to know

The purpose of the study

Design

What will be useful

What increases quality

Available time/resources

Homogeneity/variation within sample



Why do we collect
qualitative data?

Why do we gather Qualitative Data?



- To describe a phenomenon
- To describe events, patterns in behaviour & relationships
- To understand the meaning of a phenomenon
- To hear, see, and understand a phenomenon from the perspective of study participants
- To understand the values, beliefs and attitudes held by humans

Basic Data Types

Interviews

Observation

Documents

AV materials

Artifacts

Online Forums

How do we
determine which
strategies to use?

Study purpose

Research approach/rigor

Characteristics of participants

Research setting

Resources

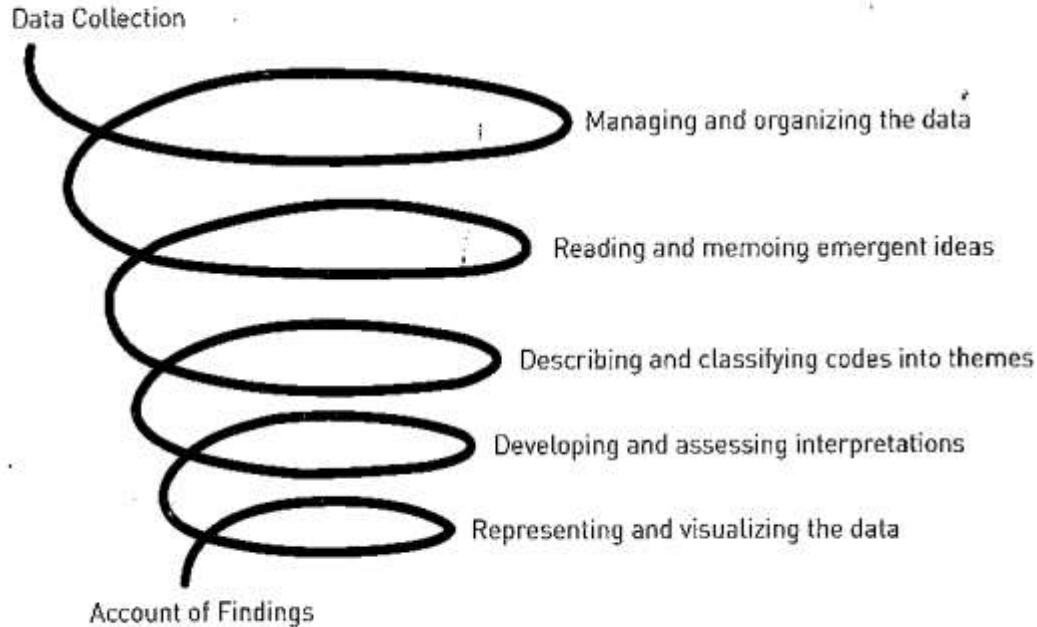
Accessibility & feasibility

Ethical considerations

Data Analysis



FIGURE 8.1 • The Data Analysis Spiral



The analytic process

Analysis – in brief!



Directed or conventional



Inductive or deductive



Immerse self in data



Code



Sort codes into categories



Develop themes