Interviews in qualitative healthcare research

Entrevistas em pesquisa qualitativa em cuidados de saúde

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ABSTRACT | INTRODUCTION: An interview is a conversation to procure information where an interviewer performs the action of questioning and an interviewee responds to the asked questions. The widely used modes are 'Face-to-Face Interview', 'Telephonic Interview', and 'Interview via Electronic/Multimedia' approach. Information acquisitions via interviews have proved their practicality under a wide range of considerations and aspects in the domains of healthcare, social sciences, management, etc. Proper selection of the method right from planning and establishment deliver the required information to the interviewer in the best expressible, and documented form to deliver results bringing the best after a whole planned workout of an interview. **OBJECTIVE:** In the present article, the author would be focused on the interview categorization in qualitative health care research. **MATERIALS AND METHODS:** Only PubMed and SCOPUS databases were searched from inception to September 2020 for this narrative review. Only English language articles were searched with keywords, "Interview", "Face-to-Face", "Qualitative research" and "Category of Interview" and linked with Boolean words such as "AND", "OR" and "NOT". Conference abstracts and proceedings articles were excluded. This narrative review did not follow the PRISMA statement. RESULTS: The selection of interviews to be used in qualitative health care research should be based on time allocation, gender, prioritization of privacy, and requirement of the content of information. The interviewer should ask one question at a time, present with normalcy in facial and body expression following response even after noting the answers to be unpredictable, and encourage the response rate to the highest for optimizing the results obtained. **CONCLUSION:** Various important aspects of the interview in qualitative health care research has been discussed in this narrative review.

KEYWORDS: Structured. Semi-Structured. Un-structured. Interview. Qualitative Research. Face-to-Face. Multimedia. Telephone.

RESUMO | INTRODUÇÃO: Entrevista é uma conversa para obter informações em que um entrevistador realiza a ação de questionar e um entrevistado responde às perguntas feitas. Os modos amplamente usados são a abordagem 'Entrevista cara a cara', 'Entrevista telefônica' e 'Entrevista por meio eletrônico / multimídia'. Aquisições de informações por meio de entrevistas provaram sua praticidade sob uma ampla gama de considerações e aspectos nos domínios da saúde, ciências sociais, gestão, etc. A seleção adequada do método desde o planejamento e estabelecimento fornece as informações necessárias para o entrevistador da melhor maneira possível, e de forma documentada para entregar os resultados que trazem o melhor após um treino planejado de uma entrevista. **OBJETIVO:** No presente artigo, o autor se concentraria na categorização da entrevista na pesquisa qualitativa em saúde. **MATERIAIS E MÉTODOS:** apenas as bases de dados PubMed e SCOPUS foram pesquisadas desde o início até setembro de 2020 para esta revisão narrativa. Apenas artigos em inglês foram pesquisados com palavras-chave, "Entrevista", "Face a Face", "Pesquisa qualitativa" e "Categoria de Entrevista" e vinculados a palavras booleanas como "E", "OU" e "NÃO". Resumos de conferências e artigos de anais foram excluídos. Esta revisão narrativa não segue a declaração PRISMA. **RESULTADOS:** A seleção das entrevistas a serem utilizadas na pesquisa qualitativa em saúde deve ser baseada na alocação de tempo, gênero, priorização da privacidade e exigência do conteúdo das informações. O entrevistador deve fazer uma pergunta de cada vez, apresentar normalidade na expressão facial e corporal após a resposta, mesmo após notar que as respostas são imprevisíveis e estimular a taxa de resposta ao máximo para otimizar os resultados obtidos. **CONCLUSÃO:** Vários aspectos importantes da entrevista na pesquisa qualitativa em saúde foram discutidos nesta revisão narrativa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Estruturado. Semi-estruturado. Não estruturado. Entrevista. Pesquisa Qualitativa. Face a Face. Multimídia. Telefone.

Introduction

In today's world, 'interview' or 'interviews'[1] poses a significant position for the acquisition of 'simple to mature' and 'single to multiple' featured information from a single interviewee or group of interviewees' by an interviewer. In simple words, 'Interview is a conversation to procure information' where an interviewer acts as questioning and an interviewee responds to the asked questions[2-4]. This procurement of information is established by the application of various modes. The widely used modes are 'Face-to-Face interview'[5], 'Telephonic interview'[6-8], and 'Interview via Multimedia'[9-13]. Information acquisitions via interviews have proved their practicality under a wide range of considerations and aspects in domains of healthcare, social sciences, management, and commerce, etc[14]. To enable mankind to plan, execute, modify, amplitude, and conclude an interview[15]; requires optimal planning, mode, accessibilities, pitfalls to be brought under the lens, which when executed delivers results in the best conceivable manner to reciprocate the inferences and applications by serving the humanity with suitable implementation, modifications, and regularization of the best strategies[16-18]. In the present article, the author would concentrate on aspects that play a significant role in the delivery and result in optimization termed as 'categorization of interviews'. This section will deal with different modes to be used for conducting an interview, considering even the smallest component without neglect for a systematized collection of information[19].

Categorization of Interviews

Interviews are categorized depending on the mission to be addressed and the quantification of information to be procured from the interviewee. Interviews are categorized under 3 main headings: 'Structured Interview' (SI), 'Semi-Structure Interview' (S-SI), and 'Un-Structured Interview' (U-SI)[2]. Each of these interview act in their respective manner which directly depends on the type and extent of information the interviewer plans to extract from the interviewee. All three methods can be applied via Face-to-Face, Telephonic, and multimedia approaches[9].

A Structured Interview (SI) is an interview that consists of a definite, standardized, and pre-determined set of questions to be asked in an already designed, same sequential manner and composition from all interviewees. Even if a study is planned to be executed in multiple geographical locations, a SI can be efficiently be used to study the same issue/disease/pathology, etc., yielding a uniform pattern and center-focused directional information from all interviewees. Answers in the form of 'Yes/No', 'Good/Bad' and 'Right/Wrong' are incorporated in the set which receives information on a conformational basis which later is put to numerical valuations for statistical analysis leading to results and later be discussed under the heading of discussion. Explanation and clarification regarding any question are addressed actively and at the same instant of time by the interviewer. SI is planned and executed as per the decision made, in other words, they do not pose any randomized application of questions. SI delivers a focused, confirmative, single-faced set of information. The interviewer asks a single question at a time with a neutral expression throughout the process even for unexpected answers from the interviewee.

Semi-Structured Interview (S-SI) is efficiently applied in qualitative research/project/studies for health care domains[20,21]. S-SI works in one major difference from SI, i.e. in S-SI the interviewer uses a pre-designed, standardized set of questions to be asked from all interviewees, but in S-SI the responses being on their own words. These responses as expressed are noted as short notes or complete sentences by the interviewer. The ability of information in the form of 'Yes/No', 'Right/Wrong', and 'Good/Bad' are not the aim of the interviewer. The aim here is to procure in-depth information from the interviewee which can only be procured if the interviewee expresses his expression in his language[14]. This makes S-SI more time consuming than SI. S-SI can be performed by either a single interviewer or set of interviewers well trained before coming in contact with the interviewees but the main focus is paid on the efficiency of answers for which S-SI is carried only once with every interviewee in a single go to prevent multiplication of views leading to biased answers creating confusion for both, the interviewee and interviewer. S-SI gives additional benefit to interviewers in probing areas based on interviewee answers thus enabling asking of supplementary questions for clarification in context with the concerned topic and associated areas. S-SI, likewise SI is also well planned before their execution. S-SI is further subdivided into; 'Individual in-depth S-SI' and 'Group S-SI's'. Individual in-depth S-SI focuses on

expression into personal and social aspects because the interview is being carried on an individual basis whereas in Group S-SI's concentration is made on social concern rather than personal because of hindrance in privacy. Interviews considering both genders as interviewees in the association, consider Individual in-depth S-SI as their mode for interviewing while interviews with single-gender prefer to install Group S-SI'S as their method of choice.

Un-Structured Interview (U-SI) is brought to practice when an interviewer aims to conduct long term fieldwork. Researchers consider U-SI to be more of a conversation rather than an interview because the expression from the interviewee governs the interviewer which directs and molds the conversation between the two[21]. In U-SI, the interviewer has no specific, standardized set of questions to be asked from the interviewee with no guidelines, options, and restrictions to be implemented while he expresses his/her views in the context being in discussions[14]. In general, it follows like a group discussion with an open, spontaneous, and informal attitude wherein the interviewer throws a question, letting all the interviewees express their opinion/thoughts from the same[21]. Following the expression of interviewees' opinions/thoughts, the interviewer plans the consecutive question, thus qualitizing questions based on the direction of conversation/ideas/views expressed by the interviewer. If the interviewer feels a distraction from the main topic, the consecutive question is designed to put the interviewees back to the main streamlined conversational topic to be in action. In other words, the expressions from the interviewees choose and direct the set of following questions. The entire process of U-SI enables the interviewer to extract the maximum and widest collective information which makes this method of interviewer selective over SI and S-SI. The extracted information is written as short notes/jolting while jointly observing and questioning the interviewee. U-SI's are sub-divided to: 'Non-directive U-SI', 'Focused U-SI', and 'Conversational U-SI'. Non-directive U-SI[22] is implemented when an interviewer aims to gather maximum in-depth-information following experience with no definite and standard set of questions. Focused U-SI expects an interviewee to be focused on the issue being put in the discussion. As no set of standard questions are implemented in Focused

USI's, still the interviewee is expected to roll around the topic of content. Any deviation from the main topic prioritizes the interviewer to bring back the interviewee on the topic in a smooth, non-destructive, and well-controlled conversation. Conversational U-SI are interviews in which the interviewer throws instant questions to an interviewee, which does not necessarily fall on the same pace and order for all interviewees'. The aim is to make the interviewee concentrate and conversate to express information revolving around the area of concern.

All categories of U-SI do not necessarily need to be planned. The feature of planning is left extensively to SI and S-SI while U-SI's are random, wherein both the set of questions from the interviewer and possibility/disproportion of answers from interviewees neither are nor predicted[14]. Hence, U-SI imparts a wide, diversified, multifaceted, and polar information, while SI gives a confirmative and only focused expression of information, making it difficult to extract in-depth information that is extensively attained by implementing U-SI and S-SI methods simultaneously[2].

Conclusion

SI, S-SI, and U-SI pose their respective attitude, advantage, and setbacks. Their selection to be used in qualitative health care research should be based on the time allocation, gender sensitivity, prioritization of privacy, and requirement of the content of information. All 3 types of interview methods can be brought to practice working with Fact-to-Face, Telephonic, and Media communication. The interviewer should ask one question at a time, present with normalcy in facial and body expression following response even after noting the answers to be unpredictable and encourage the response rate to the highest for optimizing the results obtained. Proper selection of the method right from planning, establishment, and conclusion delivers required information to the interviewer in the best expressible, conceivable, and documented form to deliver results bringing the best after a whole planned workout of an interview.

Competing interests

No financial, legal, or political competing interests with third parties (government, commercial, private foundation, etc.) were disclosed for any aspect of the submitted work (including but not limited to grants, data monitoring board, study design, manuscript preparation, statistical analysis, etc.).

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