

Intended for healthcare professionals

🗨️Rapid response to:

Practice Qualitative Research

Critically appraising qualitative research

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Rapid Response:

Re: Critically appraising qualitative research

This letter is inspired by the article 'Critically appraising qualitative research', by Kuper, Lingard, and Levinson (2008). I agree with the authors about the six key questions they mention. However, in my opinion, the list misses two more important questions. I discuss them below.

Key question 1. Was the research method and techniques used in the study relevant for the research question?

The first question Kuper and colleagues suggest to the readers of qualitative research is “Was the sample used in the study relevant for the research question?” However, in my opinion, this relevant question should be preceded by another query: “Was the research method and techniques used in the study relevant for the research question?” For instance, in the paper by Soklaridis (2009), the authors discuss why in-depth interviews were conducted:

“It was possible to gain an understanding of how the stakeholders at the clinic interact with each other, how they interpret those interactions, and how these meanings are informed by the wider socio-political context in which IHC (Integrative Health Care) takes place.”

When the readers look for this clear exemplification of reasons behind the choice of research method and instrument, they will be able to ascertain how right the methods and operational measures are for studying the involved concepts. This in turn will also help them understand the study’s trustworthiness potential, in particular, its credibility.

Key question 2. Can I make sure the results presented by the researchers are credible?

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But then, what are the ways to ensure a study has credibility? Along with checking for any mentioning of the rationale for research method selection (which we discussed under Key question 1), researchers can ensure credibility by following the chain of evidence given in the report. This would help one in reconstructing how the research developed from initial research questions to final conclusions (Kaufmann and Denk, 2011; Yin, 1994).

References

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Lakshmi Balachandran Nair

Assistant Professor

Utrecht University

Sjoerd Groenmangebouw, Padualaan 14, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 3584 CH

[lakshmibnair](#)

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