

Qualitative methods

Qualitative study articles

Qualitative methods cover a broad and varied group of interpretive procedures to analyze the meanings of social actions and human experiences. These methods can be used in different disciplines or fields and, therefore, present different parameters to assess the quality and “good practices” of research.

A basic guide is provided here with important information and scientific criteria for qualitative study articles. Before submitting your article, please consider the questions below. It is not a list of universal or mandatory items, but most of them address very relevant issues.

Adequacy for qualitative analysis purposes

- Does the article explore social processes in order to understand the meanings and senses of actions and experiences?
- Is the study theme clearly contextualized?

Theoretical framework

- Does the article present a relation with any theory or theoretical reflection regarding social and human sciences in its interfaces with collective health?
- Is there any question guiding the investigative search?

Method

- Does the article explain the types of methods used in the study, their principles and adequacy for the study theme?
- Have data for the qualitative study been collected from various sources (interviews, conversations, observations, photos, music, official documents, etc.)? In any case, has the selection of specific source(s) been justified? Have selection criteria been defined?
- Have the criteria for the selection of research field and subjects been defined? Are these criteria consistent with the study purposes?
- Have the techniques for data collection (construction) been described? Has any study limitation been clearly explained?
- Have the criteria that define the number of records to be analyzed (number of interviews, observations, or other documents) been described?

- Does the article mention the relationships, positions, and mediations between the researcher and the study subjects, and their possible influences on the results (reflexivity)?
- Does the article explain in detail data processing and analysis procedures?
- Are the stages of the interpretive process clearly highlighted? Are categorizations, groupings, comparisons, etc., clearly described?
- Does the article present the categories used in the analysis (if any)?

Results and Discussion

- Are the results clear and consistent with the study objectives?
- Is there a balance between the results presented and the different objectives listed?
- Do the results present relevant and contextualized information?
- Are the results elucidative to help understand or “answer” the study questions?
- Do the results help expand knowledge or are they restricted to the level of confirmation of prior studies?
- Is empirical evidence for the interpretations (citations, excerpts from field diaries, among others) presented in a proper and sufficient manner?
- Are interpretations demarcated, distinguished from the descriptive level?
- Do the interpretations present connections with the literature in the study field in a proper, updated and sufficient manner?
- Are the conclusions supported by the results of the study?