

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: WHEN AND HOW TO USE IT

María Arantzamendi (RN, MSC, PhD)

ATLANTES Global Observatory of Palliative Care
Institute for Culture and Society
University of Navarra

E-mail: marantz@unav.es

OrcidID: 0000-0003-2406-0668



Universidad
de Navarra



Transilvania
University
of Brasov
FACULTY OF MEDICINE



HOSPICE CASA SPERANȚEI
MAKING EVERY MOMENT COUNT

OBJECTIVES

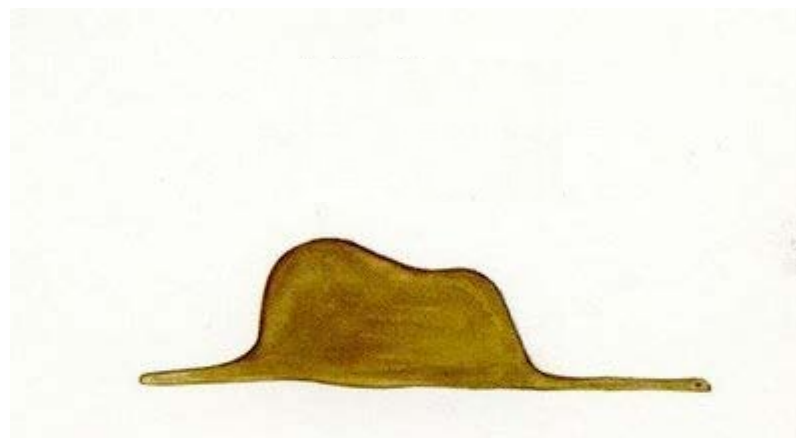
- **Overall objective:** To reflect on the principles and significance of qualitative research in palliative care
- **Specific objectives:**
 - To know the characteristics of qualitative research
 - To reflect on the contribution of qualitative research to palliative care
 - To know what makes a strong qualitative research design

WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

- It's a practice of **empirical inquiry** focused on **naturally occurring phenomena**.
- It attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the **meanings people** bring to them (Hole 2014).
- It's used to **understand people's** beliefs, experiences, attitudes, behaviours and interactions (Pathak et al 2013).



WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ABOUT?

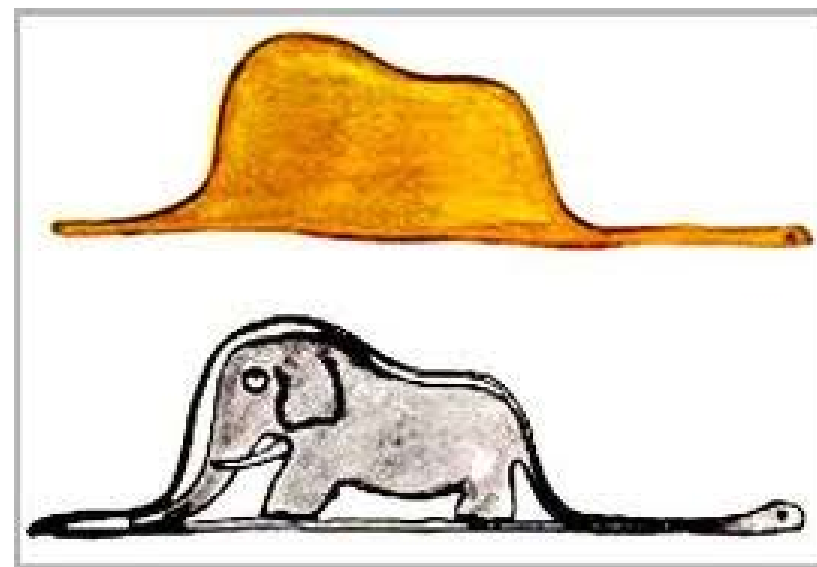


I showed my artwork to older people and asked them if my drawing scared them....

WHAT IS ABOUT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

My drawing did not depict a hat. It was a boa snake digesting an elephant.

I then drew the inside of the boa snake so that older people could understand. They always need explanations.



'Le Petit Prince'

Qualitative research **explores the underlying** - not just what is seen, but **what gives meaning** to what is seen and **what allows it to be interpreted.**

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- Naturalistic
- Focuses primarily in understanding the world from the perspective of the participants
- Broadly interpretative philosophical stance
- Researcher-participant relationship
 - Reflexivity



(Arantzamendi, de Dicastillo & Vivar 2012; Polit & Hungler 2000)

Naturalistic

- Studying the phenomenon in its '**natural environment**'
- **Understanding the context** in which phenomenon happens
- Importance of describing the **context**
- Importance of describing **participants' characteristics**



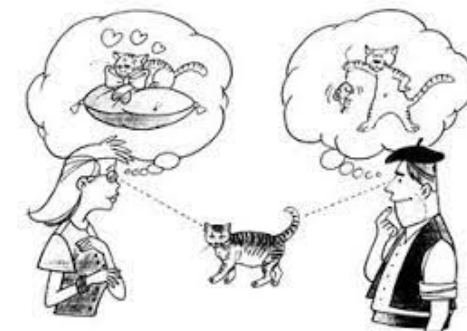
Focus on understanding the world from the perspective of the participants

- Understanding participants' perspective
(ie: patient, family, volunteers, health professionals...)
- Openness
- Choosing ways to collect the data that capture different perspectives, own wordings...
 - observations
 - interviews
 - focus group



Broadly interpretative philosophical stance

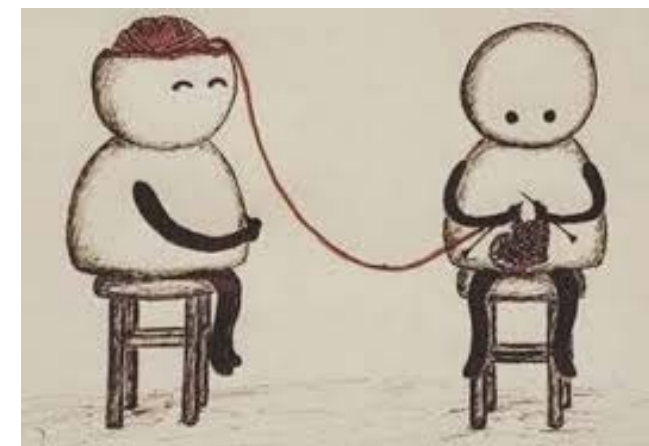
- Human beings are social beings
 - Interactions create the world, perspectives and experiences
- Interested in the ways in which the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced and produced
- How **social experience is created** and given **meaning**
 - Detailed description: long descriptive passages illustrate



Researcher-participant relationship

- Researcher-participant relationship.
 - The **subjectivities** of researcher and participants are **part of the research process**
- **'Researcher as instrument'**
 - (Pezalla et al 2012)
 - **Reflexivity**: is awareness and acknowledgement of the person, intersubjective and social processes that shape research projects.

(Hammersley & Atkinson 1995)



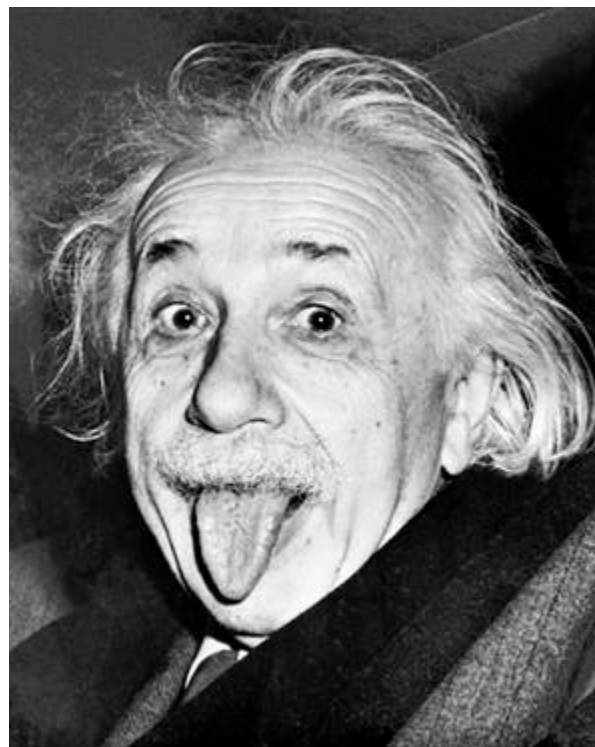
WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

- Purposeful sampling ???
- Minimally structured ???
- Open-ended modes of data collection??
- Small samples???
- Working with words???
- Flexibility???



WHY CHOOSE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

*“Not everything that can be counted counts,
and not everything that counts can be counted”*
~ Albert Einstein



WHEN TO USE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- To understand the **meanings participants** give to their actions, lives, experiences and the events and situations in which they participate
- To address a problem in which you **identify aspects that are difficult to measure**
- To understand a particular context in which participants act and the influence that context exerts on their actions.
- To **know the opinions** of those who are not usually listened to, in order to know their own perspectives
- To understand the **processes** by which events and actions take place
- To understand a **complex and particular phenomenon** or event in order to **develop theories** about it
- To develop valid **explanations** by analysing how particular events influence others, understanding causal processes in a local, contextual, situated way.

(Arantzamendi, et al 2017)

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE	TYPES OF QUESTIONS
Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the phenomenon? What is it called?
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the dimensions of the phenomenon? What variations exist? What is important about the phenomenon?
Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are all the characteristics of the phenomenon? What is actually happening? What is the process by which the phenomenon arises or is experienced?
Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the phenomenon act? Why does it exist? What is its significance/meaning??? How did the phenomenon originate?

(Polit & Hungler 2000; Salamanca 2016)

CONTRIBUTION OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TO PALLIATIVE CARE

- The qualitative approach is very harmonic with the nature of PC
- It helps to make sense of complexity
- Its openness and flexibility facilitates adjusting to patients
- Depth is important versus quantity
- It has the potential to help us to understand deeper palliative care

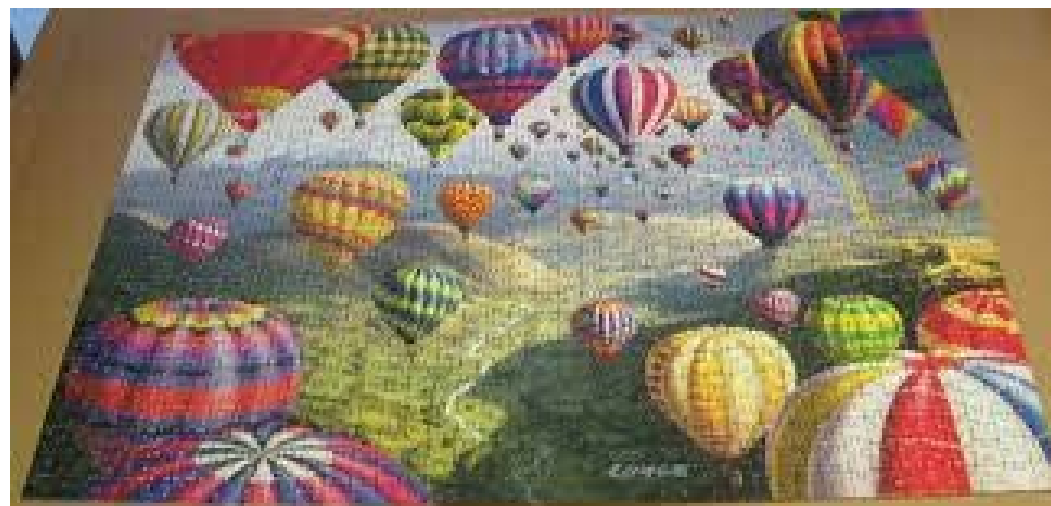
Hearing the voices of children diagnosed with a life-threatening or life-limiting illness and their parents' accounts in a palliative care setting: A qualitative study

How continuity of care is experienced within the context of integrated palliative care: A qualitative study with patients and family caregivers in five European countries

People With Advanced Cancer: The Process of Living Well With Awareness of Dying

Palliative Professionals' Experiences of Receiving Gratitude: A Transformative and Protective Resource

HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT IS WELL CONDUCTED?



WHAT MAKES A STRONG QUALITATIVE STUDY?

- **Epistemological adequacy**
 - Adequacy of the qualitative approach chosen
 - Correspondence: the theoretical assumptions expressed by the researcher and the framing of the study object
- **Methodological purposiveness**
- **Methodological congruence**
 - Good methods have integration
 - Integrity of method
 - Consistency
- **Adherence to ethical standards**



(Morse 1991, 1993; Calderón 2002)

THANK YOU



If you keep doing the same thing, then you will keep getting the same results

REFERENCES

- Aparicio M, Centeno C, Robinson CA, Arantzamendi M. Palliative Professionals' Experiences of Receiving Gratitude: A Transformative and Protective Resource. *Qual Health Res.* 2022; 32 (7):1126-1138
- Arantzamendi M, García-Rueda N, Carvajal A, Robinson CA. People With Advanced Cancer: The Process of Living Well With Awareness of Dying. *Qual Health Res.* 2020; 30(8):1143-1155.
- Arantzamendi M, García-Rueda N, Carvajal A, Robinson CA. People With Advanced Cancer: The Process of Living Well With Awareness of Dying. *Qual Health Res.* 2020; 30 (8):1143-1155.
- Arantzamendi M, de Dicastillo OL, & Vivar CG. (2012). *Investigación cualitativa: manual para principiantes.* Eunate.
- Calderon C. Criterios de calidad en la investigación cualitativa en salud (ICS): apuntes para un debate necesario. *Rev Esp Salud Pública* 2002; 76 (5): 473-482.
- Ciobanu E, Preston N. Hearing the voices of children diagnosed with a life-threatening or life-limiting illness and their parents' accounts in a palliative care setting: A qualitative study. *Palliat Med.* 2021 35(5):886-892.
- Creswell JW. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* 2012. Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

REFERENCES

- den Herder-van der Eerden M, Hasselaar J, Payne S, Varey S, Schwabe S, Radbruch L, Van Beek K, Menten J, Busa C, Csikos A, Vissers K, Groot M. How continuity of care is experienced within the context of integrated palliative care: A qualitative study with patients and family caregivers in five European countries. *Palliat Med.* 2017; 31 (10):946-955.
- Denzin NK & Lincoln YS. Entering the field of qualitative research. En N.K. Denzin e Y.S. Lincoln. *Handbook of qualitative research.* 1994 Londres: Sage. p1-17.
- Glaser BG, & Strauss A. *Awareness of dying.* 1965. Chicago: Aldine.
- Green J & Thorogood N. *Qualitative Methods for Health Research.* 2005. London: Sage
- Hammersley M & Atkinson P. *Ethnography: principles in practice.* 1995. London: Routledge. Hole R. (2014). *Qualitative health research.* In K. Bassil & D. Zabkiewicz (Eds.), *Health Research Methods.* 2014. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. p. 165-189.
- Kuper A, Reeves S and Levinson W. An introduction to reading and appraising qualitative research. *BMJ* 2008; 337:a288.
- Macphee RS, & Robertson-Wilson J. The research process: Ask the right question, get the right answers. In K. Bassil & D. Zabkiewicz (Eds.), *Health Research Methods: A Canadian Perspective.* 2014 Oxford University Press: Don Mills, ON. p. 33-61.

REFERENCES

- Mays N & Pope C. Assessing quality in qualitative research. *BMJ* 2000; 320: 50-52.
- Morse JM, Barrett M, Mayan M, Olson K, Spiers J. Verification Strategies for Establishing Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. June 2002:13-22.
- Morse JM. A Review Committee's Guide for Evaluating Qualitative Proposals. *Qual Health Res* 2003;13 (6):833-851.
- Morse JM. Evaluating Qualitative Research. *Qual Health Res*. 1991;1(3):283-286.
- Morse JM. How Different is Qualitative Health Research From Qualitative Research? Do We Have a Subdiscipline? *Qual Health Res*. 2010;20(11):1459-1464.
- Pathak V, Jena B, & Kalra S. Qualitative research. *Perspect Clin Res*. 2013 Jul;4(3):192
- Patton MQ. (2005). Qualitative Research. In *Encyclopedia of Statistics in Behavioral Science* (eds B.S. Everitt and D.C. Howell). <https://doi.org/10.1002/0470013192.bsa514>
- Pezalla AE, Pettigrew J, Miller-Day M. Researching the researcher-as-instrument: an exercise in interviewer self-reflexivity. *Qual Res*. 2012 Apr 1;12(2):165-185.

REFERENCES

- Polit DF, Hungler BP. "Introducción a la investigación en ciencias de la salud". En: Polit DF, Hungler BP. Investigación científica en ciencias de la salud. 6ª ed. México: McGraw Hill Interamericana; 2000.
- Sandelowski M. What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. Research in nursing & health, 2010 33(1), 77-84.
- Salamanca AB. La investigación cualitativa en las ciencias de la salud. Nure Investigación, 2006 nº 24, Septiembre-Octubre 06.
- Sandelowski M. What's in a name? Qualitative description revisited. Research in nursing & health, 2010 33(1), 77-84.
- Strauss A & Corbin J. Basics of Qualitative Research. 1990. Newbury Park, California, Sage.
- Vasilachis de Gialdino I. Estrategias de investigación cualitativa. 2006. Barcelona. Gedisa editorial.
- Whittemore R; Chase SK, & Mandle CL. Validity in qualitative research. Qual Health Res. 2001 11 (4): 522-537.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.
This presentation reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Research for all palliative care clinicians 2020-1-RO01-KA202-080128