

Interviews

What:

A conversation with a purpose.

Purpose:

- To gain an in-depth understanding of individuals' perspectives, practices, and experiences.

Advantages:

- Obtain personal, detailed understanding of areas being studied.
- Can be used in conjunction with other strategies, for example to assist in survey design or to help explain practice patterns.

Disadvantages:

- Conducting interviews and analyzing data requires extensive time and effort.
- Lack of anonymity may limit respondents' openness.
- Limited to a smaller sampling number.
- Data is based on self-report.

Interview Tips:

Interviews can be structured, unstructured, or semi-structured.

Semi-structured interviews utilize a series of open-ended questions as a guide:

- Identify purpose and suitable sampling strategy. Purposive sampling is the selection of people who have background/experience related to the purpose of the interview.
- Develop and pilot test interview question guide: questions should be neutral, sensitive, and clear, begin with open-ended questions and end with closed-ended questions, questions should flow.
- Prepare interviewee: explain purpose of interview and types of questions to be asked, obtain consent, discuss issues of confidentiality, choose appropriate time and setting (can be in-person or by telephone).
- During interview: establish comfortable rapport, repeat purpose of interview, ask probing questions, demonstrate active listening, be non-judgmental, allow for interviewee to express his/her own ideas and meanings, ensure that you have understood interviewee's meanings, maintain focus.
- Record interviews: write notes during or after interview and/or audiotape (request permission), which can then be transcribed.
- Thank respondents and provide contact information in case they have further information.
- Analyze data: maintain open-mind (be aware of preconceived notions), read data, take notes, code data, review for emerging themes.

Examples of studies using interviews:

1. Feldstein A, Simon SR, Schneider J, et al. How to design computerized alerts to safe prescribing practices. *Jt Comm J Qual Saf*, 2004;30:602-13.
2. Gollop R, Whitby E, Buchanan D, et al. Influencing sceptical staff to become supporters of service improvement: a qualitative study of doctors' and managers' views. *Qual Saf Health Care*, 2004;13:108-14.
3. Peterson WE, Medves JM, Davies BL, Graham ID. Multidisciplinary collaborative maternity care in Canada: easier said than done. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada*, 2007;29:880-6.
4. Short D, Frischer M, Bashford J, et al. Why are eligible patients not prescribed aspirin in primary care? A qualitative study indicating measures for improvement. *BMC Fam Pract*. 2003;4:9.

Resources:

- Gubrium JF, Holstein JA (Eds.). Handbook of interview research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 2002.
- Kvale, S. *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 1996.

References:

1. Bingham WVD, Gustad J. How to interview. Revised. New York: Harper, 1959.
2. Britten N. Qualitative research: qualitative interviews in medical research. *BMJ*, 1995;311:251-253.
3. Crandall SJS. Using interviews as a needs assessment tool. *JCEHP*, 1998;18:155-162.
4. Hays RB, Davies HA, Beard JD, et al. Selecting performance assessment methods for experienced physicians. *Med Educ*, 2002;36:910-917.
5. Patton MQ. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage. 1990.