

## Thinking about qualitative research

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In the last four decades there has been a considerable increase in qualitative research in the field of the health sciences, beyond its original field in the social sciences, as it is possible to see in electronic scientific literature databases. This is not a restrict phenomenon for Brazilian scientific publication, extending to international especially in the U.S., Canada and some European countries.

Since the mid 1980's in Brazil the area of nursing strongly accompanies this trend in the development of thesis and dissertations based on phenomenological, ethnographical, among others, allowing to know the human being on its complexity and depth as well as the health care process. In the field of health, the Brazilian nursing was pioneered in this research modality, becoming over the years an important national reference for several areas. This movement may occurred due to the strong influence of the interpersonal relationship in the nursing care, or also because many responses essentially by quantitative studies were unsatisfactory or incomplete.

The qualitative research basically can be understood as one that produces findings from any procedures or other quantification tools. Through qualitative research it is possible to know about the symbolic and particular experiences, behaviors, emotions and feelings experienced, or even understand about the organizational functioning, social movements, cultural phenomenon and the interactions between people, their groups and social institutions<sup>(1-2)</sup>.

The debate "quantitative versus qualitative" has offered important subsidies to know about possibilities and limits of researches in these approaches. By the way, in some of these researches some misconceptions remain about what really constitutes the qualitative research. Different people has different understanding of "qualitative research"<sup>(1)</sup>, and it is vey common that researchers collect their data through techniques understood as qualitative (open or semi-structured interviews, observation, and others), but they statistically codify these data and still call their researches as "qualitative". However, in this situation the research has a strong quantitative basis, and the researcher must care that the use of qualitative techniques in quantitative studies do not affect the results and reliability of this research.

In the qualitative research conducting it is essential the researcher in the field of study to ensure that it will be developed a real and reliable relationship between the researcher and the participant, breaking the "hierarchical" and polarized relationship between them, and thus getting closer to know about the symbolic and subjective world. There is no how to develop a qualitative research without the researcher engages in the field and its actors to understand about the living process from that reality. Intersubjectivity is required to the development of a qualitative research, whether through any data collection technique choose from the researcher who has to observe the methodological rigor in the same way as any other modality of scientific research.

This also means that beyond the requested rigor with the data collection techniques the researcher has to recognize the participants' movements in the research context, working on an interactivity process perspective. Therefore, the movement of data collection is a process built by both, researcher and participants, based on a strong emphasis to the research process regarding to exhaust the web of meanings of the studied phenomenon. These precautions are essential for the reliable and consistent data production that allow an in-depth analysis of these data.

Thus, regarding a qualitative research is necessary a competent theoretical support an methodological rigor, but the researcher creativity should be present throughout the research process<sup>(2)</sup>. In other words, although the qualitative researcher should support the research in theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the entire process of study it is essential to see that the technique does not prevail in the research and to warrant that creativity comes throughout the research.

Whereas that researchers who work on qualitative approaches are responsible for its spreading and consolidation it is essential that in new researchers training the importance of consistency and rigor in the development of

qualitative research projects be emphasized, in order to sustain the whole research process and to produce consistent and unpublished findings that contribute to the scientific knowledge advancement in the areas of Nursing and Health Sciences.

## REFERENCES

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