

Developing a reporting guideline to improve meta-ethnography in health research: the eMERGe mixed-methods study

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Declared competing interests of authors: Jane Noyes reports partial reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses to attend meetings to develop Confidence in the Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative Research (CERQual) from the World Health Organization, Alliance for Health Systems and Policy, Norad and Cochrane during the conduct of the study; reports partial reimbursement for travel expenses for co-chairing the Cochrane Methods Executive and membership of the Scientific Committee from Cochrane outside the submitted work; has two patents licensed for CERQual and the iCAT_SR tool, both of which were released under the Creative Commons License; and is a member of the National Institute for Health Research Dissemination Centre Advisory Group.

Published February 2019

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr07040

Plain English summary

The eMERGe mixed-methods study

Health Services and Delivery Research 2019; Vol. 7: No. 4

DOI: 10.3310/hsdr07040

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Plain English summary

Many research studies are carried out that ask people about their experiences; for example, the research may ask people what it is like to live with an illness or ask about their experience of health care or different types of treatment. When several studies have been carried out on the same research topic, it can be useful to pull the findings of those studies together and see whether or not more can be understood about the topic by looking at all the different findings and viewpoints in the studies. Meta-ethnography is an approach for helping researchers to pull together these types of studies. Before this project started, we had identified that a lot of research that used this approach did not include important information which could let the reader know how the research team had pulled the studies together and come up with their findings.

At that time, there were no guidelines about what information researchers should include in their reports when they had used this approach. During this study, we have developed guidance for how to report this research approach. We followed several steps to develop the guidance, including (1) gathering advice that other researchers had published about what should be reported; (2) checking what has been reported well and not so well in reports using this approach; (3) asking a wide range of people, including experts, users and patients, what they think should be included in reports that use this approach; and (4) pulling together all this information to produce the guidance and getting feedback on the guidance from a wide range of people. We hope that this guidance will help to improve the quality of meta-ethnography reporting. We have produced training materials, which are available at www.emergeproject.org (accessed 26 March 2018).

This plain English summary was developed in conjunction with two lay members of the Project Advisory Group, Geoff Allan and Ian Gallagher.

Health Services and Delivery Research

ISSN 2050-4349 (Print)

ISSN 2050-4357 (Online)

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This report

The research reported in this issue of the journal was funded by the HS&DR programme or one of its preceding programmes as project number 13/114/60. The contractual start date was in June 2015. The final report began editorial review in July 2017 and was accepted for publication in October 2017. The authors have been wholly responsible for all data collection, analysis and interpretation, and for writing up their work. The HS&DR editors and production house have tried to ensure the accuracy of the authors' report and would like to thank the reviewers for their constructive comments on the final report document. However, they do not accept liability for damages or losses arising from material published in this report.

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