Interpretive Description: A reflexive qualitative method in action

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June 13th, 2016

Plan

› Origins and directions
› The research example
› Conclusions
› Discussion
what is interpretive description?

“provides direction in the creation of an interpretive account that is generated on the basis of informed questioning, using techniques of reflective, critical examination, and which will ultimately guide and inform disciplinary thought in some manner”

(Thorne et al, 2004)
About ID: Origins

› Need to ground knowledge in a clinical nursing context
› Practicality

“need to move beyond established qualitative methodologies in order to generate credible and meaningful disciplinary knowledge” (Thorne, 1997)
Philosophical underpinnings
(Thorne et al 2004) (quote)

1) There are multiple constructed realities that can be studied only holistically. Thus, reality is complex, contextual, constructed, and ultimately subjective.
2) The inquirer and the “object” of inquiry interact to influence one another; indeed, the knower and known are inseparable.
3) No a priori theory could possibly encompass the multiple realities that are likely to be

Methodological hallmarks

- Borrows from other naturalist methods such as GT, phenomenology, ethno
- **Sampling**: purposeful and theoretical
- Reflexive methods
- Concurrent and iterative analysis
- Open-ended strategies: inquiry is flexible and tailored to the problem (Elliot & Timulak, 2005)
Goal of ID

“a coherent conceptual description that taps thematic patterns and commonalities believed to characterize the phenomenon studied and accounts for the inevitable individual variations within them” (Thorne, 2004)

NOT a creation of new truth or theory development

Outcome= tentative truth claim about **common nature** of clinical phenomena

Product of ID

- Inform clinical reasoning,
- Apply the insight for practice decisions,
- Create a sense-making structure for differences that occur in healthcare setting.
Internet cancer information use by newly diagnosed individuals and interactions with the health care system: A mixed methods study

Interpretive description in action
Research objectives

1. To identify the content of the most commonly used websites from a holistic nursing perspective.
2. To explore the prompts to use the internet and how the internet informs the ways in which patients utilize and interact with health services and providers.
3. To document which websites are accessed and the patterns and usage.

Conceptual Frameworks

Behavioral Model of Health Service Utilization
(Andersen, 1995)
Conceptual Frameworks:
Carper’s Fundamental Patterns of Knowing

Sociopolitical

Ethics

Empirical

Personal

Esthetics

Embedded MM Design

Interpretation based on QUAL + QUAL(quantitative)
Approaches to data collection

1. To identify the content of the most commonly used websites from a holistic nursing perspective.
2. To explore the prompts to use the internet and how the internet informs the ways in which patients utilize and interact with health services and providers.
3. To document which websites are accessed and the patterns and usage.

1. A qualitative review of websites
2. Individual interviews with patients newly diagnosed with cancer
   Interviews & focus groups with healthcare providers
3. Surveys with individuals newly diagnosed with cancer

Data sources

1. Individuals newly diagnosed with cancer
2. Websites
3. Healthcare providers
Plan versus reality: Objective 1

- To identify the content of the most commonly used websites from a holistic nursing perspective.
- 2-step analysis of commonly used cancer websites
  - Carper’s ways of knowing
  - Concurrent analysis
  - Results identify context and content of commonly viewed websites
- A critical review of cancer websites from a holistic nursing perspective
- 2-step analysis of commonly used cancer websites
  - Consensus search strategy (n=12)
  - Participants NDC (n=8)
- Carper’s ways of knowing & philosophy of technology
  - Concurrent analysis
  - Results identify and critique context and content of commonly viewed websites

Challenges with Objective 1

- Literature on website analysis methods limited
- Writing up data anonymously
- Using a theory to guide, but not direct
- Inductive and deductive approaches
Plan versus reality: Objective 2

To explore the prompts to use the internet and how the internet informs the ways in which patients utilize and interact with health services and providers

In-person interviews w 20 NDC
2 interviews
Semi-structured, evolving, interview guide
Goal: initial understanding of internet use rs w health service use

An interpretive description of Internet use by individuals newly diagnosed with cancer

Individual interviews with 20 NDC
2 interviews
In person & phone
Semi-structured
Member checking on second call

Objective 2 con’t

Plan: To explore the prompts to use the internet and how the internet informs the ways in which patients utilize and interact with health services and providers

Reality:
Provider perspective
Interviews (4) and focus groups( 3) (n=23 providers)
Open ended interview guide
Sharing patient perspective
Discussing emerging findings
Triangulating pt views
Challenges w Objective 2

› Some interviews V. short
› Challenges w timelines
› Trouble recruiting men,
› ++ women w breast ca
› Challenges focusing patients (& providers)

Analytic challenges:

› Narrowing in on the research question
  - benefit of the second call
  - member checking

› Exploring negative cases
  - Why do people abandon the internet?

Mixing data from providers and patients?
  - 2 Ms or 1?
Plan versus reality: Objective 3

- To document which websites are accessed and the patterns and usage.
- Complete survey
- Discuss in interviews

Not much different, EXCEPT...
- Had to retrace patient searches

Rigour

- Epistemological integrity
  - overarching inductive approach
  - reflexive methods.
- Credibility
  - member checking
  - multiple data sources
  - triangulating sources
- Analytic logic
  - use of memos
  - audit-trail of key decisions
- Interpretive authority
  - grounding findings in data
  - exemplary quotes
Thoughts on Data analysis

› Analytic framework
› What does this mean?
   Should be prospective and retrospective

Example of analytic frame

› Impressions of 'answers to research questions'
› Based on your disciplinary expertise
› What led you to ask these questions?
› And then…
› Documenting initial emerging thoughts
› Revising and member checking
Implications for research

› Be willing to be wrong
› Be willing to ‘go further’ to answer the questions.
› Don’t work alone
› Disciplinary is important, but outside perspective is also key

Concluding thoughts
"What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing."

- Aristotle

Acknowledgements

› Canadian Association of Nurses in Oncology, Research Grant
› University of Ottawa, Graduate scholarship
› CIHR PORT

› Supervisors: Roanne Thomas & Wendy Gifford
Thank you!

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