Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE)
Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies¹

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution - NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license visit http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/

Citation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Design:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Does the study address a clearly focused question/hypothesis
   - Setting?
   - Perspective?
   - Intervention or Phenomena
   - Comparator/control (if any)?
   - Evaluation/Exploration?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Can’t tell</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. Is the choice of qualitative method appropriate?
   - Is it an exploration of eg behaviour/reasoning/beliefs)?
   - Do the authors discuss how they decided which method to use?

3. Is the sampling strategy clearly described and justified?
   - Is it clear how participants were selected?
   - Do the authors explain why they selected these particular participants?
   - Is detailed information provided about participant characteristics and about those who chose not to participate?
4. **Is the method of data collection well described?**
   - Was the setting appropriate for data collection?
   - Is it clear what methods were used to collect data?
   - Type of method (e.g., focus groups, interviews, open questionnaire etc) and tools (e.g., notes, audio, audio visual recording).
   - Is there sufficient detail of the methods used (e.g., how any topics/questions were generated and whether they were piloted; if observation was used, whether the context described and were observations made in a variety of circumstances?)
   - Were the methods modified during the study? If YES, is this explained?
   - Is there triangulation of data (i.e., more than one source of data collection)?
   - Do the authors report achieving data saturation?

5. **Is the relationship between the researcher(s) and participants explored?**
   - Did the researcher report critically examining/reflecting on their role and any relationship with participants particularly in relation to formulating research questions and collecting data).
   - Were any potential power relationships involved (i.e., relationships that could influence in the way in which participants respond)?

6. **Are ethical issues explicitly discussed?**
   - Is there sufficient information on how the research was explained to participants?
   - Was ethical approval sought?
   - Are there any potential confidentiality issues in relation to data collection?

7. **Is the data analysis/interpretation process described and justified?**
   - Is it clear how the themes and concepts were identified in the data?
   - Was the analysis performed by more than one researcher?
   - Are negative/discrepant results taken into account?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.</th>
<th>Are the findings credible?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are there sufficient data to support the findings?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are sequences from the original data presented (e.g., quotations) and were these fairly selected?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the data rich (i.e., are the participants’ voices foregrounded)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the explanations for the results plausible and coherent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the results of the study compared with those from other studies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| 9. | Is any sponsorship/conflict of interest reported? |  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10.</th>
<th>Finally…consider:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did the authors identify any limitations?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are the conclusions the same in the abstract and the full text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

*Add comments relating to areas of concern that were avoidable and a statement indicating if the results are reliable and/or useful.*

---

This checklist should be cited as:

Specialist Unit for Review Evidence (SURE) 2018. Questions to assist with the critical appraisal of qualitative studies available at: [http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/specialist-unit-for-review-evidence/resources/critical-appraisal-checklists](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/specialist-unit-for-review-evidence/resources/critical-appraisal-checklists)

---