Qualitative Evaluation in Health Care

Developing your protocol

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Lecture readings

1. It is not necessary to read beforehand but please bring to the lecture
2. Please prepare these articles for the written exam

Prior to drafting the protocol

Visualising the programme

Asking, Answering and Analysing the questions

1. Please bring to the lecture
Doc 1: Proposal content page; Doc 2: Example of Protocol; Doc 3: Example of field notes

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Lecture outline

1. Principles and three key elements of your protocol
   • Review examples from the literature

2. Practise question formulation

3. Reflect on your Content page

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The learning objectives are:

• To introduce you to the issues to keep in mind when drafting your evaluation protocol.
• To critically review examples from the literature on protocol development.
• To help you reflect on a protocol for the research study that you submitted beforehand.
Discussion: Protocol development

**Proposal** (for commissioning agency/ethics) = **Protocol** + literature review + budget + references [see *Doc 1: Proposal content page/Doc 2: Example of Protocol*]

- **Evaluation** = Comparison = Asking questions
- **Protocol** = a detailed ‘road map’ to compare the ‘paper’ of the intervention/programme with the ‘practise’ thereof.

**Principles**

1. Involvement of evaluation stakeholders
   1. Those who commission and those to become co-evaluators
   2. Awareness of apprehension towards the evaluation

2. Phrasing of evaluation: not judgement (fail or pass) but to learn how it works and “demystifying the black box”.

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Discussion: Protocol development

Principles
3. Theoretical underpinning/justification for the ‘how’ of the evaluation
4. Iterative and flexible process
5. As detailed as possible
6. Journaling ... journaling ... journaling: nothing to trivial [See Doc 3: Example of field notes]
7. Peer review throughout

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Protocol checklist

Step 1: Scoping the programme
1a: Analysis of evaluation stakeholders (Bryson et al., 2011)
   - All who can affect and/or are affected by the evaluation and/or its findings
   - Diverse, therefore needs focus: “primary users” (see p. 2)
   - Power and Interest: Fig 2
   - Programme theory (see Astbury and Leew, 2010)
   - Fig 4: practical and note their note in the caption “Cycle back and revise …”

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Protocol checklist

Step 1: Scoping the programme
1a: Analysis of evaluation stakeholders (Bryson et al., 2011)

- NB: Throughout all of the evaluation phases
- Ambitious ...RealWorld Evaluation (Bamberger et al., 2012): dealing with constraints

*Practical example*: Multisite RCT: a home visitation intervention to reduce risks to unintentional childhood injuries

- Who will be the evaluation stakeholders?
- Omnipresence of evaluator: An ‘Eureka’ moment when they began volunteering information

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Protocol checklist

1b: Visual display of the programme (Hasson, 2010)
   • Flowcharts, tables, text to connect the dots
   • Moderators shaping each other; moderators shaping fidelity ... not a linear relationship
   • The jargon of scientists can be confusing:
     ➢ Context/Mechanisms/Outcome pattern configurations (Pawson and Tilley, 2004)
     ➢ Figure 1 and Table 1 (Saunders et al., 2005)
   • ... but the essence stays the same: it is all about the art of formulating questions

Exercise: Evaluating lay community health workers’ use of mobile phones (mHealth) to record their services across 3 sites
   • What are the questions you would want to answer through your qualitative evaluation?

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Protocol checklist

Step 2: How are you going to answer the questions and what are you going to do with the answers

• Table 4 (Saunders et al., 2005) to plot your evaluation

Exercise: mHealth programme - questions around the training

Let’s assume it is the same trainer, the training is done per site and one of the questions was: ‘Are there differences in how the training is conducted across the sites?’

• How and from whom will you collect the answers?
  ➢ Structuring the observations (see Bouffard et al. 2003; Doc 3)
  ➢ How do you propose to analyse observations?
• Can we do without mixing quantitative data collection into the pot?

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To be included in your proposal

Step 3: Ensure that the other components are detailed in your proposal

a. A theoretical framework for the evaluation
   - 4th Generation (Guba and Lincoln)
   - Utilisation-focused (Patton)
   - Realist (Pawson and Tilley)
   - RealWorld (Bamberger)
   - And others

b. Reporting and dissemination

c. Ethics

d. Budget

e. Time frame

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The integrity of the profession of evaluation “rests firmly on the quality of critical thinking exhibited by its practitioners”

“Never expect to know “what works,” just keep trying to find out”
Recommended readings


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