

# Qualitative research in social sciences and health care (sciences)

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**SOCIAL SCIENCES**



Qualitative researchers operate under different ontological assumptions about the world.

There is a single unitary reality apart from our perceptions.

Since each of us experiences from our own point of view, each of us experiences a different reality.

Conducting research without taking this into account violates the fundamental view of the individual.





**The strengths of qualitative research**



The fact that you are interviewing people tells an observer nothing about why, or about what you will do with those data.

But the content and form of interviews and what you see in them will be different for different methods.

This is because how you think about the data differs from method to method.





## **Typically in literature mentioned limitations of qualitative research**

The aim of qualitative analysis is a complete, detailed description.

Ambiguities, which are inherent in human language, can be recognized in the analysis.

The main disadvantage of qualitative approaches to corpus analysis is that their findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can.



# Conclusions

## **Questions to reflect on:**

- Do we need to extend always and all the qualitative findings to huge populations then where authenticity and uniqueness will take place?
- May we stay strong in saying that subjectivity of QUAL research is the strong part, not a limitation?



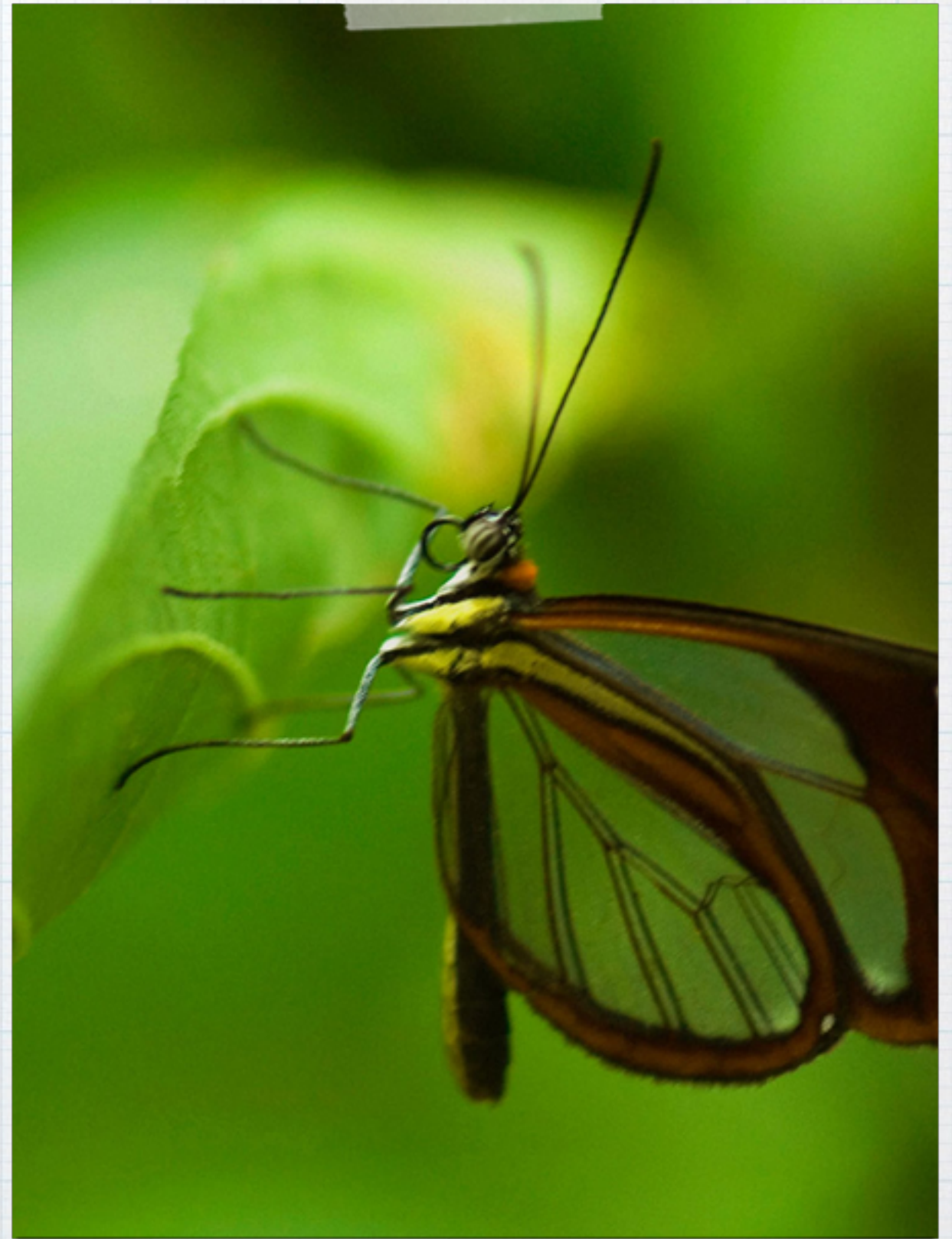




# Qualitative research in health care (sciences)

Qualitative research offers a variety of methods for identifying what really matters to patients and carers, detecting obstacles to changing performance, and explaining why improvement does or does not occur.

The use of such methods in future studies could lead to a better understanding of different phenomena in health care and medicine.





Qualitative research has come to the fore in health and social research by providing ways of answering these sorts of questions, both in the form of “stand alone” or independent research projects and as a complement to quantitative studies.



It is not possible here to elaborate on the origins and theoretical underpinnings of this distinctive approach to research, but it is important to be aware that qualitative research is informed by a quite different paradigm to that which governs quantitative clinical and biomedical research.



The emphasis in qualitative research is on understanding meanings and experiences makes it particularly useful for social and health care research, for example, health care quality assessment, quality assessment of higher education, and for unpacking some of the complex issues inherent to quality improvement in health care or in educational practice, research or politics.



# Standards



I believe that qualitative research methods are founded on an understanding of research as a systematic and reflective process for development of knowledge that can somehow be contested and shared, implying ambitions of transferability beyond the study setting.



*Drawing on these assumptions, the researcher must be prepared to use strategies for:*

- \* questioning findings and interpretations, instead of taking them for granted;
- \* assessing their internal and external validity, instead of judging them obvious or universal;
- \* thinking about the effect of context and bias, without believing that knowledge is untouched by the human mind;
- \* and displaying and discussing the processes of analysis, instead of believing that manuals grant trustworthiness.





# Specific challenges

The effect of an investigator on a study, the principles and consequences of sampling, and the process of organisation and interpretation during analysis, all affect research, and are closely related to different aspects of validity.



# Reflexivity



# Transferability



# Interpretation and analysis



# Conclusions

- \* HEALTH CARE research needs diversity.
- \* We need to prevent methodological separatism and supremacy if the field of medical knowledge is to be expanded, not just strengthened or divided.
- \* Responsible application of qualitative research methods is a promising approach to broader understanding of clinical realities.
- \* No research method will ever be able to describe peoples lives, minds, and realities completely though, and medical doctors should be reminded that scientific knowledge is not always the most important or relevant type of information when dealing with people.





Thank you for attention

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