



WEEK 10

# Medical Research

Phenomenology and Grounded Theory



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## 1. Definition of Phenomenology

- **Phenomenology** is a qualitative research approach that studies the **lived experience** of individuals.
  - It focuses on describing the **essence of a phenomenon** as experienced by people who lived it.
  - The term comes from Greek: **phainomenon (appearance)** and **logos (study/science)**.
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## 2. Key Idea (Core Concept)

- The main goal is to understand **how people experience and interpret their world**.
  - Each person has a **unique subjective reality**, which is considered valid.
  - It seeks the **essence (core meaning)** of shared human experiences.
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## 3. Founders and Key Scholars

- **Edmund Husserl** is the founder of phenomenology.
  - **Moustakas** is a major modern contributor to phenomenological research.
  - Other key references include **Creswell (2007)** and **Sanders (1982)**.
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## 4. Goal of Phenomenology

- To describe the **meaning of experience**:
  - What is experienced
  - How it is experienced
- To produce a clear statement that captures the **essence of the phenomenon**.

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## 5. Meaning of “Essence”

- The **essence** is the **core structure of meaning** that defines a phenomenon.
  - It explains what makes an experience what it fundamentally is.
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## 6. Assumptions

- Human experience is **subjective**.
  - Within experiences, there are **essential meanings and structures**.
  - These meanings are accessed through **rich description of lived experiences**.
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## 7. Research Questions in Phenomenology

- What is the **meaning/essence** of this experience?
  - How is this experience lived by individuals?
  - Examples:
    - What is it like to experience pain?
    - What is it like to be a nurse or mother?
    - What is it like to feel empathy or boredom?
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## 8. Role of the Researcher

- The researcher’s own experiences may be included.
  - The aim is to identify a **universal essence** shared between researcher and participants.
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## 9. Fields of Application

- Common in: **social sciences, psychology, nursing, education, and health sciences.**
  - Best suited for studying **emotional, complex, and deeply personal experiences.**
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## 10. Types of Phenomenology

- **Descriptive (Transcendental):** focuses on describing experiences with minimal interpretation.
  - **Interpretive (Hermeneutical):** focuses on **interpreting** the meaning of lived experiences.
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## 11. Descriptive Phenomenology (Transcendental Approach)

- The goal is to achieve **transcendental subjectivity**, meaning the researcher minimizes personal bias and preconceptions.
  - The researcher attempts to view the phenomenon with **“newness” as if for the first time.**
  - The researcher remains **detached** so that personal subjectivity does not influence participant descriptions.
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## 12. Bracketing (Epoche)

- A key method in descriptive phenomenology where researchers **set aside prior knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions.**
- Purpose is to examine the phenomenon with a **neutral and open perspective.**
- Can be strengthened through:
  - **Researcher triangulation** (multiple researchers comparing interpretations)
  - **Member checking** (participants validate findings to ensure accuracy of lived experience)

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## 13. Interpretive (Hermeneutic) Phenomenology

- Based on the idea that interpretation is unavoidable.
- The term **hermeneutic** comes from Hermes (Greek god of interpretation).
- Researchers understand experiences through their **own background and prior knowledge**.
- Meaning is shaped by the interaction between **past and present understanding**.

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## 14. Heidegger's Concept ("Being-in-the-world")

- Humans cannot be separated from their world or experiences.
- Focus is not pure subjectivity but how people **live and interpret everyday life situations**.
- Emphasizes **meaning in lived narratives** rather than isolated consciousness.

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## 15. Example of Phenomenological Research

- Study: *Kidney graft failure patients' experiences*.
- Research question: **How do patients experience kidney graft failure?**
- Outcome: Developed **themes describing meaning-making of the experience**.
- Findings were compared with existing **psychosocial transition frameworks**.

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## 16. Design Characteristics of Phenomenology

- Uses **purposive sampling (5–25 participants)** until data saturation is reached.
  - Participants must have **direct experience of the phenomenon**.
  - Homogeneous samples are preferred to identify **shared meanings**.
  - Data is collected through **verbatim interviews, recordings, and field notes**.
  - Data collection and analysis are **closely connected and theme-based**.
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## 17. Steps in Phenomenological Research

- Confirm that phenomenology is the **appropriate approach**.
  - Define the **phenomenon of interest** clearly.
  - Understand philosophical foundations (e.g., **bracketing, lived experience**).
  - Collect data using **in-depth interviews and qualitative methods**.
  - Start with broad **“What” and “How” questions** to explore experiences.
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## 18. Data Collection Methods

- **In-depth interviews (main method)**
  - **Participant observation**
  - **Focus groups**
  - **Conversations**
  - **Diary or personal text analysis**
  - Data is usually recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for themes.
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## 19. Phenomenological Interviews (Seidman Model)

- Conducted in **three stages**:
    1. **Life history interview** (background and context)
    2. **Experience reconstruction** (details and structure of the experience)
    3. **Meaning reflection** (personal interpretation of experience)
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## 20. Structure of Phenomenological Interview

- Must include three main areas:
    - **Contextualization** (life world and natural attitude)
    - **Apprehending the phenomenon** (how experience appears)
    - **Clarifying meaning** (interpretation and imaginative reflection)
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Phenomenological Attitude	Researcher Approach	Interview Structure	Method	Example Question
Phenomenological Reduction (Epoché)	Acceptance of Natural Attitude of Participants	Contextualization (Eliciting the Lifeworld in Natural Attitude)	Descriptive/Narrative Context Questions	"Tell me about becoming ill," or "Tell me how you came to be at the satellite unit."
	Reflexive Critical Dialogue With Self	Apprehending the Phenomenon (Modes of Appearing in Natural Attitude)	Descriptive and Structural Questions of Modes of Appearing	"Tell me about your typical day at the satellite unit," or "Tell me what you do to get ready for dialysis."
	Active Listening	Clarifying the Phenomenon (Meaning Through Imaginative Variation)	Imaginative Variation: Varying of Structure Questions	"Describe how the unit experience would change if a doctor was present at all times."

Figure 1. A structure of phenomenological interviewing.

## 21. Data Analysis in Phenomenology

- **Horizontalization:** treating all data as equally important before analysis.
- Identifying and highlighting **significant statements** that describe participants' lived experiences.
- Grouping data into **clusters of meaning and themes**.
- **Phenomenological reduction:** continuously returning to the data to identify the **core essence and inner meaning** of the experience.

## 22. Strengths of Phenomenology

- Provides a **deep understanding of real-life experiences**.
- Gives voice to participants and highlights **hidden or sensitive issues**.
- Allows participants' meanings to **emerge naturally without researcher imposition**.
- Encourages detailed exploration of **complex human experiences**.

## 23. Challenges of Phenomenology

- **Bracketing is difficult**, as researchers may struggle to separate personal beliefs from data.

- Requires carefully selected participants who have **direct experience of the phenomenon**.
  - Small and specific samples may limit **generalization of findings**.
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## 24. Conclusion of Phenomenology

- The final outcome is a **composite description of the essence of the phenomenon**.
  - This description represents the **invariant structure (core meaning)** of the experience.
  - The goal is that readers understand **what it feels like to experience the phenomenon**.
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## 25. Grounded Theory (Introduction)

- Developed by **Barney G. Glaser and Anselm Strauss** in the 1960s.
  - Focuses on generating **theory from data rather than testing existing theory**.
  - Uses an **inductive approach (from data → theory)**.
  - Explains **processes, actions, or interactions** (“what is going on”).
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## 26. Definition of Grounded Theory (Different Scholars)

- **Glaser & Holton:** integrated conceptual hypotheses generated to build an **inductive theory**.
  - **Strauss & Corbin:** theory derived from data that is **systematically collected and analyzed**.
  - **Charmaz:** method that builds **conceptual frameworks through inductive analysis**.
  - **Birks & Mills:** process of **generating theory from data analysis**.
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## 27. Grounded Theory (General Concept)

- **Grounded Theory (GT)** is a qualitative research method that develops **theory from data** rather than starting with a hypothesis.
  - It works in a **reverse direction compared to traditional research**.
  - The result is often described as a “**reverse-engineered hypothesis**” because theory is built from observed data.
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## 28. Grounded Theory Design (Coding Stages)

- **Open Coding:** breaking data into parts and identifying **concepts, properties, and dimensions**.
  - **Axial Coding:** linking categories together and identifying the **central phenomenon and relationships**.
  - **Selective Coding:** integrating categories to form a **final theory** explaining the relationships.
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## 29. Categories, Properties, and Dimensions

- **Categories** have **properties** (different aspects or perspectives).
  - Properties are **dimensionalized (continuum values)**.
  - Example:
    - Color → properties: hue, tone, shade, intensity
    - Dimensions: light ↔ dark
  - Example (data):
    - Watching → frequency, duration, intensity
    - Information passing → amount, manner
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## 30. Definition of Coding in GT

- Coding is the process of **breaking down, labeling, and reorganizing data**.
- It involves assigning **codes to words, sentences, or paragraphs**.
- Purpose: to create **categories for comparison and theory development**.

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## 31. Coding in Qualitative vs Quantitative Research

- **Quantitative coding:** uses predefined categories to produce **frequency counts**.
- **Qualitative coding:** focuses on **meaning, interpretation, and conceptual development**.
- Goal is not counting, but **fracturing data to build theory**.

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## 32. How to Generate Codes (Key Questions)

- What is this data an example of?
- What is happening here?
- What are people doing or saying?
- What concept does this represent?
- What meaning or pattern does it suggest?

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## 33. Open Coding (Definition)

- First stage of grounded theory analysis.
- Data is **broken down into small segments** for analysis.
- Researchers identify, label, and develop **concepts and ideas**.
- Uses **line-by-line or word-by-word analysis**.

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## 34. Axial Coding (Definition)

- Second stage of grounded theory.
  - Focuses on finding **relationships between categories**.
  - Links categories around a **central phenomenon**.
  - Identifies **conditions, context, actions, and consequences**.
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## 35. Axial Coding (Purpose)

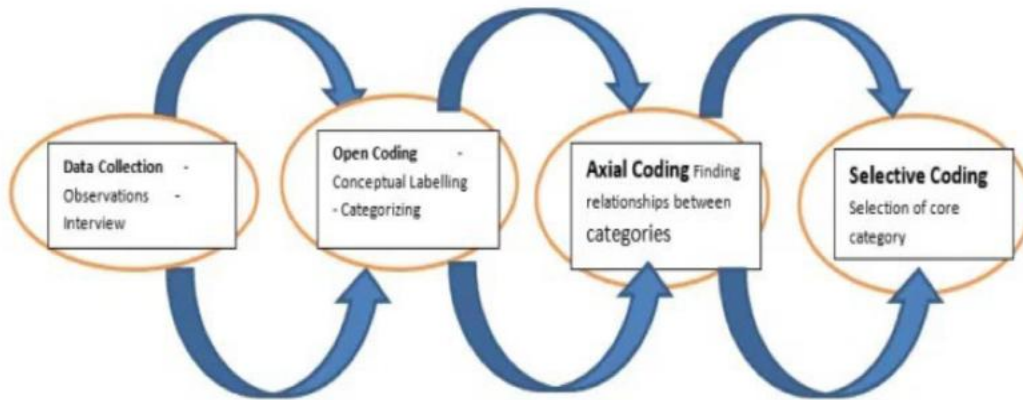
- Reconnects categories after open coding.
  - Builds a **structured model of relationships**.
  - Explores **causal links and interactions** between concepts.
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## 36. Axial Coding Process

- Identify:
    - **Causal conditions** (why it happens)
    - **Context** (where/when it happens)
    - **Strategies** (how people respond)
    - **Intervening conditions** (factors that influence actions)
    - **Consequences** (results)
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## 37. Axial Coding Model Structure

- **Model flow:**
    - Causal conditions → Central phenomenon → Context → Intervening conditions → Actions/strategies → Consequences
  - Used to build a **theoretical explanation of a process**.
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## 38. Selective Coding (Grounded Theory)

- Focuses on the **most important categories** to develop a final theory.
  - Identifies a **core category** that explains most of the variation in the data.
  - All other categories are systematically linked to the **core category**.
  - Refines and integrates categories to form a **coherent theoretical explanation**.
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## 39. Theoretical Sampling

- Data collection and analysis occur **simultaneously**.
  - Early analysis guides **what data to collect next**.
  - Participants are selected based on **emerging concepts and categories**.
  - Sampling continues until **theoretical saturation** is reached (no new insights).
  - Purpose is to **refine and elaborate emerging theory**.
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## 40. Unique Features of Grounded Theory (1–2)

1. **Simultaneous data collection and analysis**
  - Early findings shape later data collection.
  - Research evolves continuously until **saturation**.
2. **Theory emerges from data (not pre-set hypotheses)**
  - Codes and categories are **data-driven**, not predefined.

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## 41. Unique Features of Grounded Theory (3–4)

### 3. Memo-making

- Informal notes used to record ideas and **theoretical connections** between categories.

### 4. Theoretical sampling

- Participants are selected based on **emerging findings**, not random selection.
- Helps refine and deepen developing categories.

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## 42. Unique Features of Grounded Theory (5–6)

### 5. Constant Comparative Method (CCM)

- Data are continuously compared across categories to refine concepts.
- Helps confirm and strengthen emerging themes.

### 6. Delayed literature review

- Literature is reviewed **after initial analysis** to avoid bias.
- Ensures concepts **emerge directly from data**.

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## 43. Challenges of Grounded Theory

- True objectivity is difficult because researchers may be influenced by **prior knowledge or experience**.
- It can be hard to determine when **theoretical saturation** is reached.
- Studies may be limited by **time, funding, or small sample sizes**, affecting completeness.
- Risk of **bias and incomplete theory development** if data is insufficient.

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## 44. Example of Grounded Theory Study

- Study: *How do care providers and women manage birth?*

- Methods: focus groups with women and healthcare providers.
- Findings: developed a theory about **risk management strategies during childbirth**, such as:
  - Accepting or resisting medical interventions
  - Planning vs letting birth unfold naturally

## 45. Review Questions (Grounded Theory)

- What is the purpose of Grounded Theory? → To **develop theory from data**.
- What are coding types? → **Open, Axial, Selective coding**.
- Advantage of GT? → Produces **data-driven, real-world theory**.
- Theoretical sampling means? → Selecting participants based on **emerging data and concepts**.

### Axial Coding: The Resulting Paradigm Model (Strauss & Corbin)

	Model component	Description	How to identify	Example
A	Causal condition	events or incidents that lead to the occurrence of a phenomenon	Point out by: when, while, since, because, due to, on account of.	breaking a leg
B	Phenomenon	central idea	Ask: what is this data referring to?	pain
C	Context	Set of properties and that pertain to a phenomenon and conditions within the strategies are taken	Under the specific condition...	Located in, of high intensity
D	Intervening conditions	Broad and general condition bearing upon strategies	Time, space, culture, economic and technological status, career, history and individual biography.	Person age, other illnesses, past history with pain
E	Action / Interaction strategies	Respond, handle, carry out a phenomenon	Action oriented verbs or participles	Keep warm, go for emergency help
F	Consequences	Outcomes to a phenomenon	Events or happenings, actual or potential.	Pain relief

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