



WEEK 7

# Medical Research

Sampling in Qualitative Research



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# 1. Introduction to Qualitative Sampling

- Qualitative research usually uses a **small number of cases studied in depth**, unlike quantitative research which aims for large sample sizes.
  - Qualitative research allows exploration of the **detail and richness of data**.
  - It uses **non-probability sampling**, with little attempt to obtain a representative sample.
  - The sampling process is **iterative**, meaning it develops and is refined throughout the study.
  - Data analysis influences **sampling decisions and sample size**.
  - Sampling continues until **data saturation** is reached, meaning no new themes, ideas, or concepts emerge.
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## 2. Approaches to Sampling in Qualitative Research

### A. Non-Conceptually Driven Approaches

- Convenience Sampling
- Opportunistic Sampling

### B. Conceptually Driven Approaches

- Purposive Sampling
  - Theoretical Sampling
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## 3. Convenience Sampling

- Participants or settings are selected because they are **easily accessible** to the researcher.

## Advantages

- Less expensive.
- Requires less time and effort.

## Example

A researcher studying student stress interviews students from his own university because they are easy to access.

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## 4. Opportunistic Sampling

- The researcher takes advantage of **new opportunities** that arise during the study.
- Useful when little is known about the research setting.

## Example

While studying nurses, the researcher unexpectedly gains access to an emergency department and decides to collect additional data there.

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## 5. Purposive Sampling

- The researcher deliberately selects participants believed to be **most useful for answering the research question**.
- Selection may depend on:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Attitudes
  - Beliefs

## Example

A researcher studying experiences of cancer survivors specifically recruits people who have completed cancer treatment.

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## 6. Forms of Purposive Sampling

- Maximum Variation Sampling
- Homogenous Sampling
- Deviant Sampling
- Typical Case Sampling
- Critical Case Sampling
- Confirming and Disconfirming Sampling
- Stratified Purposeful Sampling
- Snowball Sampling

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## 7. Maximum Variation Sampling

- Selects participants who vary widely on important characteristics.
- Aim: identify themes that remain true across diverse participants.

### Example

Studying patient satisfaction by including males, females, young adults, elderly patients, urban residents, and rural residents.

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## 8. Homogenous Sampling

- Selects participants with **similar backgrounds and experiences**.
- Commonly used in **focus groups**.

### Example

A focus group consisting only of first-year nursing students.

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## 9. Deviant Sampling

- Selects **extreme or unusual cases**.
- Includes remarkable successes, failures, crises, or exceptions.

### Example

Studying academic performance by comparing the highest-performing and lowest-performing students.

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## 10. Typical Case Sampling

- Focuses on **average or typical cases**.
- Requires agreement on what represents a typical case.

### Example

Studying an average public hospital that represents most hospitals in the country.

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## 11. Critical Case Sampling

- Selects cases expected to provide **critical information** with maximum generalizability.
- Logic:
  - If it happens here, it can happen anywhere.
  - If it doesn't happen here, it probably won't happen elsewhere.

### Example

Testing medical instructions on experienced doctors; if they cannot understand them, others likely cannot either.

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## 12. Confirming and Disconfirming Sampling

• Includes:

- Cases supporting current findings (**confirming**)
- Cases contradicting current findings (**disconfirming**)

### Purpose

- Strengthen credibility.
- Explore alternative explanations.

### Example

If most nurses report high job satisfaction, the researcher also interviews nurses who report low satisfaction.

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## 13. Stratified Purposeful Sampling

- Participants are selected from specific **subgroups** of the population.
- Allows comparison between groups.

### Example

Comparing male and female nursing students regarding clinical stress.

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## 14. Snowball Sampling (Friend of Friend)

- Initial participants identify additional participants.
- Useful for **hard-to-reach populations**.

### Example

A researcher studying drug users asks each participant to refer other users.

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## 15. Theoretical Sampling

- Sampling decisions are guided by:
  - Theoretical framework.
  - Emerging theory from collected data.
- Goal:
  - Develop or challenge hypotheses.
- Starts with similar cases studied in depth.
- Later includes outlying cases to test whether findings still hold.
- Data collection and analysis occur simultaneously.
- Sampling stops when **no new insights emerge**.

### Example

A researcher develops a theory about burnout among ICU nurses, then samples nurses from different departments to see if the theory still applies.

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## 16. Flexibility in Qualitative Sampling

- Flexibility is an important feature of qualitative research.
  - When little is known about a phenomenon, it may be difficult to make sampling decisions beforehand.
  - A flexible design allows:
    - Reflection.
    - Preliminary analysis.
    - Modification of sampling decisions as the study progresses.
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## مكثف التتین

Sampling Type	Main Idea
Convenience	Easy to access
Opportunistic	Uses emerging opportunities
Purposive	Selects most useful participants
Maximum Variation	Very diverse participants
Homogenous	Similar participants
Deviant	Extreme cases
Typical Case	Average cases
Critical Case	Most informative cases
Confirming/Disconfirming	Support and challenge findings
Stratified Purposeful	Compare subgroups
Snowball	Friend refers friend
Theoretical	Sampling guided by theory
Saturation	Stop when no new themes appear

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