Searching For Qualitative Evidence

Helen Buckley Woods
Learning Outcomes

- Describe the particular challenges inherent in identifying qualitative research
- Apply question tools to identify the facets of your search strategy
- Identify key terms to assist retrieval of qualitative research
- Demonstrate an awareness of search filters for qualitative research
Today’s Session

• A game of two halves:
  • Constructing a search strategy and sources of evidence
  • Filters and other techniques
Part One: Search strategies and sources
What’s different about searching for Qualitative Research?

Using question tools to identify key concepts and plan your search

Sources of Qualitative Research

Case study: worked search example

Practical: Sifting Abstracts Exercise
Qualitative research seeks to understand and interpret personal experiences, behaviours, interactions, and social contexts to explain the phenomena of interest, such as the attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives of patients and clinicians; the interpersonal nature of caregiver and patient relationships; the illness experience; or the impact of human suffering. (Wong et al, 2004)
What do I need to consider?

- Qualitative research is small part of the research literature
- The indexing in databases is inconsistent and variable
- Qualitative studies sometimes have creative titles or inadequate abstracts
- Medline might not be your preferred resource.
- If searching in limited databases try MEDLINE and CINAHL
Sources of Qualitative Research
Sources of Evidence

- Bibliographic databases and catalogues
- Papers suggested by individuals
- Supplementary Methods
- Web and Grey literature searches
Databases

- Core health databases: Cinahl, Embase, Medline, Cochrane Library

- Subject specific databases: ERIC, Scopus, PsychINFO, ASSIA
Dissertations and Books

- Dissertation Abstracts
- Index to Theses
- British Library Catalogue
- COPAC
- Specialist Library Collections
Grey Literature

- Evidence which is unlikely to be found from bibliographic databases ...can be defined as “materials not published commercially or indexed by major databases.” (Giustini, 2011).

- Material not widely disseminated and that "Fugitive", hidden, invisible or literature in the deep web may be on government sites, deep in archives, institutional repositories, theses databases, conference sites, associations. (Giustini, 2011).

- Useful to find additional papers or evidence on grass roots research which has not been published and indexed in journals databases.

- Interventions for the prevention of pre-diabetes in high risk groups: examples of current practice in relation to the UK evidence base. (ScHARR 2010)
Grey literature/Web searching

- HMIC, Social Policy & Practice
- NHS Evidence
- Open Grey, OpenDOAR
- Specific topic related websites e.g. National obesity observatory, Campbell Collaboration
- Google Scholar, Scirus
Sources of Evidence

- Bibliographic Databases
- Papers suggested by individuals
- Supplementary Methods
- Web and Grey literature searches
So how does this work in practice?

You are conducting a systematic review to examine the lack of support available for the husbands of women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

The review commissioners want to answer “what counselling and support services should be offered in response to the husbands’ needs?”
What counselling and support services should be offered to the husbands of women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer?

- **Population** – Spouses of women with breast cancer
- **Intervention** – Counselling and support services
- **Comparison** – None
- **Outcome** – Not usually added to search strategy
What are the perceptions and experiences of husbands of women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer?

Setting: Any

Perspective: Husbands

Interest, Phenomenon of: Women diagnosed with breast cancer

Comparison: the women themselves?

Evaluation: perceptions and experiences
What *counselling* and support services should be offered to the *husbands* of women who have been diagnosed with *breast cancer*?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population terms</th>
<th>Intervention terms</th>
<th>Comparison terms</th>
<th>Outcome terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breast cancer</td>
<td>Advice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Search ID #</td>
<td>Search Terms</td>
<td>Search Options</td>
<td>Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S7</td>
<td>S3 and S5</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="276">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S6</td>
<td>S4 or S5</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="3015">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S5</td>
<td>(MH &quot;Breast Neoplasms&quot;)</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="31072">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S4</td>
<td>TI breast cancer OR AB breast cancer</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="20014">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>S1 or S2</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="7530">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>(MH &quot;Spouses&quot;)</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="4579">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>TI (husband* or spouse*) OR AB (husband or spouse*)</td>
<td>Search modes - Boolean/Phrase</td>
<td><a href="4903">View Results</a>, [View Details], [Edit]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying Qualitative Research – Terminology – ESCAPAIDE

- Generic terms: e.g. “qualitative” plus
- **Exploratory Methods:** Focus group, Grounded theory, Action Research, Content analysis, Thematic analysis
- **Software:** Nudist or NVivo
- **Citations:** Glaser & Strauss
- **Application:** Ethnology, Psychology
- **Phenomenon:** Perceptions, Attitudes, User Views, Standpoint, Viewpoint
- **Approaches:** Ethnographic
- **Data:** Stories, Narratives, Descriptions, Themes, Findings
- **Experiences:** Encounters, Experiences
Exercise - Identifying Qualitative Research from Abstracts

• Using the handout provided consider the six references taken from Cinahl or Medline.

• For each references mark all the words or phrases that identify the item as qualitative research.
Feedback from Exercise
Recap on the session so far

- Challenges in searching for qualitative research
- Sources
- Using question tools to help design your search
- Case Study
- Keywords and subject headings to consider
Part Two: Search Filters and other search techniques
• “Supplementary” searching methods
• Methodological filters
Sources of Evidence

- Bibliographic databases and catalogues
- Papers suggested by individuals
- Supplementary Methods
- Web and Grey literature searches
“Supplementary” Methods

- Citation searches
- Reference lists
- Hand searching
“Supplementary” Methods

- “The conventional subject search identified 30 of 41 included references...References were missed by this method and a further 11 references were identified via citation searching, reference list checking and contact with experts...additional search techniques were essential and located further high quality references.” (Papaioannou et al, 2010)

- Systematic reviews of complex evidence cannot rely solely on protocol-driven search strategies.” (Greenhalgh and Peacock, 2005)
Citation Searching

We identify a key methodological or subject text:

Web of Science℠

Cited Reference Search  (Find the articles that cite a person’s work)

Step 1: Enter information about the cited work. Fields are combined with the Boolean AND operator.

* Note: Entering the volume, issue, or page in combination with other fields may reduce the number of cited reference variants found.

- **Slager B**  in **Cited Author**
- Example: O'Brien C* OR O'Brien C*

- **1967**  in **Cited Year(s)**
- Example: 1943 or 1943-1945

Add Another Field >>

Search  Clear  Searches must be in English

Current Limits: (To save these permanently, sign in or register.)

- **Timespan**
  - All Years (updated 2011-08-21)
  - From 1899 to 2011 (default is all years)

- **Citation Databases**: Science Citation Index Expanded (SCI-EXPANDED); Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI); Arts & Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI); Conference Proceedings Citation Index - Science (CPCI-S); Conference Proceedings Citation Index - Social Science & Humanities (CPCI-SSH)

- Adjust your search settings
- Adjust your results settings
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED THOERY</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED THE</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED TH</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>4775</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>64313</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>12713</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASER B</td>
<td>DISCOVERY GOUNDED T</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Title: Impact of clusters on exhibition destination attractiveness: Evidence from Mainland China
   Authors: Lin, Xian; Wei, Xia; Bauer, Thomas
   Source: TOURISM MANAGEMENT Volume: 33 Issue: 6 Pages: 1429-1439 DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2012.01.005 Published DEC 2012

2. Title: Web users' behavioral patterns of tourism information search: From online to offline
   Authors: Ho, Chang-Iuan; Lin, Meng-Hui; Chen, Hung-Mei
   Source: TOURISM MANAGEMENT Volume: 33 Issue: 6 Pages: 1460-1462 DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2012.01.016 Published DEC 2012

3. Title: Factors affecting children's oral health: perceptions among Latino parents
   Authors: Cortez, Dinamia E.; Reategui-Sherpe, Ludith; Spitz, Aaron; J. et al.

4. Title: VIEWING THE WORLD: VISUAL INQUIRY IN INTERNATIONAL SETTINGS
   Authors: Kwon, Jean Corel

5. Title: Business Case Analysis and the Confounds of Innovation Driven by Performance-Based Postproduction Support Strategies
   Authors: Thomas, Wesly S.; Brud, Stephen P.; Nenicka, David R.
   Source: TRANSACTIONS OF THE PERSUADERS Volume: 30 Issue: 3 Pages: 1-12 DOI: 10.5175/JSWE.2012.200901132 Published WIN 2012
What is a methodological filter?

• “A hedge or filter is a standardised search strategy that is designed to be used in conjunction with a subject search to retrieve valid studies from the (primary) medical literature”.

• Filters work in one of two ways:
  • by identifying particular publication types or study designs most likely to answer a question
  • by isolating subject or free-text terms most likely to be associated with high-quality studies
How do they work?

- Filters come from 3 different sources:
  - Subject heading
  - Keyword
  - Publication type
How do I use a methodological filter?

**Step One:** Carry out a subject search as usual using subject headings and/or free text

**Step Two:** Apply methodological filter appropriate to question you are asking

- One-line filter
- Maximum sensitivity filter
- Maximum specificity filter
- Mid-range filter
Definitions

- Sensitivity: the ability of a search strategy to identify relevant records
- Specificity: the ability of a search strategy to exclude irrelevant records

One-liner filters

- MeSH Headings
  - e.g. Qualitative Research [Medline 2003-]
- Keyword
  - “Findings”
- Publication Type
  - Research [CINAHL only]
Methodological filters 1

MEDLINE

1. Nursing-Methodology-Research.DE.
2. qualitative ADJ research
3. grounded ADJ theory
4. ethnograph$
5. 1 or 2 or 3 or 4

Methodological filters 2

1. qualitative$
2. findings
3. interview$
4. interviews.DE.
5. 1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4

Methodological filters - 3

Sensitivity-maximising filter
(interview$).tw. or px.fs. or exp health services administration/

Specificity-maximising filter
(qualitative or themes).tw.

Optimised filter
(interview$ or experience$ ).mp. or (qualitative).tw. or interview/ or or qualitative research/

Methodological filters 4 – Ovid MEDLINE

Best Sensitivity
- interview:.tw. OR px.fs. OR exp health services administration/

Best Specificity
- qualitative.tw. OR themes.tw.

Best Optimization of Sensitivity and Specificity
- interview:.mp. OR experience:.mp. OR qualitative.tw.

http://hiru.mcmaster.ca/hiru/HIRU_Hedges_MEDLINE_Strategies.aspx#Qualitative
Methodological filters - 5

- Best sensitivity: exp interviews
- Best specificity: audiorecording.sh.
- Best optimization of sensitivity and specificity: exp study design

Methodological filters - 6

- Don’t forget MeSH heading **Qualitative Research**
  - Introduced in 2003, so coverage is limited
  - But you can combine it with one of the previous filters by using the “OR” operator
Sources of filters

- ISSG search filters resource
  http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/crd/intertasc/

- SIGN
  http://www.sign.ac.uk/methodology/filters.html

- McMaster Hedges Project
  http://hiru.mcmaster.ca/hiru/HIRU_Hedges_home.aspx

- PubMed Clinical Queries
Each Question requires a different solution...

- Findings showed that a simple search strategy (broad-based terms - 3 search terms) was as effective as a complex one (free text - 48 search terms) in locating qualitative research on patients’ experiences of living with a leg ulcer.

- It may be feasible to restrict searches with a clear nursing focus to the CINAHL bibliographic database.

- Replication of findings with other nursing topics is required.

Learning Outcomes

- Describe the particular challenges inherent in identifying qualitative research
- Apply question tools to identify the facets of your search strategy
- Identify key terms to assist retrieval of qualitative research
- Demonstrate an awareness of search filters for qualitative research
References - 1


References - 2


References - 3


References - 4


