

## Achieving Quality in Qualitative Research at Capital Health

### *Qualitative Complements Quantitative*

Debates over the merits of qualitative and quantitative research continue but many researchers are now realizing the merit in using both types of research in conjunction with each other or as complementary methods for collecting and analyzing data. Qualitative research uses interviews, focus groups, observations and media such as photographs and videos to generate data. An important difference between the two types of research is the active role the researcher plays in qualitative research. Employing inductive techniques, the researcher becomes immersed in the data, using skills and methods that are uniquely qualitative. The values, experiences and perspectives of the researcher are reflected in the research outcomes.

Quantitative research methods have always been the mainstay of medical research whereas qualitative research methods have evolved over the last few decades. Since it is the new kid on the block, there are few training opportunities and limited expertise available across North America.

The Halifax research community is indeed fortunate to have an experienced qualitative research consultant available at the Research Methods Unit. With more than 25 years experience in qualitative research, Raewyn Bassett, Ph.D, has worked in health policy with the New Zealand Ministry of Health and has experience in clinical drug trials, the Canadian Study of Health

and Aging, program evaluation and scoping interviews. She is a power user of qualitative data analysis software and has taught qualitative methods in Dalhousie University's Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program.

### *Achieving High Quality Research*

As in all research, quality is important. To achieve a high quality qualitative study, Dr. Bassett suggests anyone contemplating qualitative research:

- acquire qualitative training and read up about qualitative methods
- arrive at a sound understanding of your value system—How do you understand the world in which you live? Where do you stand on the continuum of objective and constructed reality?
- consult the RMU qualitative methodologist for guidance
- if possible, work with a qualitative mentor to observe and acquire qualitative skills
- obtain instruction and employ the powerful software tools for compiling and analyzing qualitative data

Since January 2009, in her role at the Research Methods Unit, Dr. Bassett has conducted a series of training sessions covering over 20 qualitative research topics. This spring she ran 12 in-depth workshops focusing on Nvivo 9 and ATLAS.ti.6. These workshops attracted a capacity audience, indicating the growing interest of the local research community in qualitative research.

### Qualitative Research in the Clinical Setting

Qualitative research investigates naturally occurring phenomena, their context and relationships, and is conducted in an everyday setting. Patients' and/or clinicians' experiences are recorded in text, video, audio or in photographs, and understood and interpreted using a variety of analysis methods, such as grounded theory, narrative or conversation analysis.

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Discovery and Innovation for Health





## Focus on Evidence: FAQs



by Robin Parker, Clinical Research Librarian  
 Research Methods Unit, Nova Scotia Cochrane Resource Centre  
 Capital Health Library Services

*Q. In preparing for a grant proposal, I was advised to conduct a scoping review to better justify my approach to my research program. Is this the same thing as a literature review? If not, what makes it different?*

A. Many terms are used in reference to knowledge synthesis research: systematic review, realist review, scoping review, narrative review, etc. As a result, there is also confusion about the differences between the types of reviews, when each type is appropriate, and how to conduct a good review of any type. The answer to this question is beyond the scope of this column. Here is a short answer and reference to an article that gives an excellent overview of review types (1).

A scoping review consists of a comprehensive search of the evidence on a topic, using the databases of the peer-reviewed journal literature and grey literature sources, such as association and government websites. The search results are then screened to identify those that actually address the research question, but generally are not limited to a specific type of study or publication type. This is because the purpose of a scoping review is to map out the evidence on a topic and illuminate the context in which the situation (e.g., which could be a therapeutic intervention or health services program) occurs. Because the scoping review addresses the overall situation, such as why an intervention works or doesn't work and if the intervention is effective, you may want to consider qualitative as well as quantitative research, depending on your question.

Another factor that distinguishes scoping reviews is that the methodology is recommended when there is a need to understand what types of evidence exists to address a certain question. This review type is useful when the topic is interdisciplinary and you are not sure where the majority of the evidence is located. Because scoping reviews often deal with broader research questions, input from stakeholders and the entire research team is required in order to refine the research question, which may be done in an iterative process following an initial search. For a full description of the methods for conducting a scoping search, check out the seminal Arksey and O'Malley methodology framework article (2).

Scoping reviews are sometimes seen as a preliminary step to conducting a systematic review. This is partially true in that the results of a scoping review may suggest a more specific review question that can be appropriately addressed with a systematic review. However, the idea that scoping reviews are a less rigorous form of knowledge synthesis is not correct, since scoping reviews, just like systematic reviews, should have consistent methods and transparent reporting in order to reduce potential sources of bias. As with systematic reviews and any other research, the methods should be detailed as much as possible before starting and the steps, including searching, synthesis, and discussion, require expertise to be done well. If you are interested in conducting a scoping review as part of your research program, consult a medical librarian with experience in knowledge synthesis projects.

Type: Feature:	Scoping review	Literature Review	Narrative	Realist	Systematic
Question	What is known about a less well defined topic	What is known about a well defined topic	Broad	Broad; complex, theory-based	Focused
Search strategy	Unknown and iterative	Unknown	Not known	Known and iterative	Described
Study selection	Known, but post hoc	Unknown	Not known	Known and iterative	Uniformly applied criteria
Inferences	Thematic, makes comparisons	Descriptive	May be based on evidence	Explanatory rather than 'judgmental'	Clearly based on scientific evidence
Advantages	Identifies research gaps, maps what is known and context	Maps what is known	Breadth, historical, phenomena	Contextualized (what works, for whom, when?)	Replicable, resolve discordance

1. Grant MJ, Booth A. A typology of reviews: an analysis of 14 review types and associated methodologies. *Health Info Libr J.* 2009 Jun;26(2):91-108.

2. Arksey H, O'Malley L. Scoping studies: towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology.* 2005 Feb;8(1):19-32.



The QEII Health Sciences Centre Foundation invites you to experience an exquisite evening where passion, energy, and inspiration will take you out of the ordinary and into a world of *discovery*.

On **Saturday, October 13, 2012** the Cunard Centre in Halifax will be transformed into a wonder of the senses as it plays host to the inaugural ***Charm Diamond Centres Night of Discovery*** gala.

**BE INSPIRED** by the amazing discoveries. Discoveries that are improving mechanical heart transplants, revealing new methods for early lung cancer detection and uncovering new therapy options for stroke patients.

**INDULGE** in enticing new cuisine.

**BE CAPTIVATED** by musical talents that will leave you wanting more.

**BROWSE** new auction items that are exclusive to guests only.

**Date: Saturday, October 13, 2012**

**Location: Cunard Centre - Pier 23**

**961 Marginal Road, Halifax**

**Start Time: 6:00pm Pre Reception**

**Dress: Formal Attire**

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Join us in this evening of discovery as we look ahead to the future of health care and the advancement of research being done at the QEII Health Sciences Centre.

Visit [www.qe2foundation.ca](http://www.qe2foundation.ca) to buy your tickets today.

# Congratulations...

## March 2012 Research Fund Award Recipients -- Total Funding \$208,986

Applications for the next round of awards are due at 4 p.m., September 15, 2012. Details at: <http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/discovery-innovation/research-fund-competiton>

Name	Department	Award	Research Description
Rob Adamson	Surgery/ENT	\$15,000	Development of an active implant to stimulate peri-implant bone formation and for in-vivo assessment of osseointegration
Manohar Bance	Surgery/ENT	\$14,988	Calibration of measures for in-vitro assessment of bone conduction implants
Kathryn Birnie	Psychology/Faculty of Science	\$3,530	Examining the role of spirituality and religion in coping and managing with chronic pain.
Sean Christie	Surgery/Neurosurgery	\$14,575	Isolation of microRNAs from injured rodent spinal cord tissue in the context of lipid peroxidation
Sultan Darvesh	Medicine/Neurology	\$14,999	A pilot study to evaluate butyrylcholinesterase radioligands as molecular imaging agents for multiple sclerosis
Jill Duncan	Masters - School of Health Administration	\$2,163	Hypertension Treatment Guidelines Specific to the Frail Elderly: An Evaluation of the Impact of Education on Prescribing in a Long Term Care Facility in Nova Scotia
Patrick Froese	Emergency Medicine	\$7,440	Assessment of Extremity Injuries by Advanced Care Paramedics to Determine the Need for Diagnostic Imaging - Resubmission
Nick Giacomantonio	Medicine/ Cardiology	\$14,995	Development of the Step Test as an Alternative Method for Assessing Exercise Tolerance in Adults with Risk Factors for Cardiovascular Disease
Carl Jarvis	Emergency Medicine/EMS	\$13,650	Effect of Education on Staff Familiarity with an Emergency Department Disaster Plan
Stephanie Kaiser	Medicine / Endocrinology	\$9,888	Acromegaly morphometric scale and psychopathological scoring
Earl Kowalczyk	Surgery/Orthopedics	\$5,000	Biomechanical Analysis of Periprosthetic Fixation for Vancouver Type B1 Fractures using 4.5mm Locked Plates
Myron Kwapisz	Anesthesia	\$14,944	The use of Fibrinogen concentrate in high-risk cardiac surgery: A prospective, double-blinded, randomized, controlled study
Marilyn McKay-Lyons	Medicine/Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	\$15,000	Exploring potential synergistic effects of aerobic exercise and cognitive training on cognition after stroke.
Laurel Murphy	Emergency Medicine/ Medicine	\$4,600	Comparison of the King Vision Video Laryngoscope with Direct Laryngoscopy in Easy and Difficult Airway Simulations
Barbara Pavlova	Psychiatry/Mood Disorders Program	\$14,622	Cognitive behavioural therapy for social phobia in people with bipolar disorder: a pilot study
Christopher Richardson	Surgery/ Orthopedics	\$11,313	Synoptic Reporting of Total Hip and Knee Arthroplasty Operative Reports: Demonstrating Content Coverage with SNOMED CT
John Ross	Emergency Medicine	\$7,400	Validation of Simulation Based Assessment Methodology for Evaluating Resuscitation Skills in Emergency Medicine Postgraduate Trainees
Kathleen Spurr	School of Health Science/Respiratory Therapy	\$9,879	Creation of a Tool for Assessing Evidence Based Decision-Making Knowledge and Skills in Healthcare Professionals.
Andrew Travers	Medicine/ Emergency Medicine	\$15,000	The impact of a novel collaborative program between emergency medical services and long term care: an observational study.

# Opportunities...

## Grant Opportunities

Deadline	Program Name	Agency	Website
July 6, 2012	Mesothelioma Research Grants	Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation	<a href="http://www.curemeso.org/site/c.kkLUJ7MPKtH/b.4097447/k.E6A3/Mesothelioma_Research_Grants__Call_for_Applications.htm">http://www.curemeso.org/site/c.kkLUJ7MPKtH/b.4097447/k.E6A3/Mesothelioma_Research_Grants__Call_for_Applications.htm</a>
July 9, 2012	Clinical Investigator Award in Breast Cancer	Society of Surgical Oncology	<a href="http://www.surgonc.org/grants--trials/research-grants/clinical-investigator-awards/clinical-investigator-award-in-breast-cancer-research.aspx">http://www.surgonc.org/grants--trials/research-grants/clinical-investigator-awards/clinical-investigator-award-in-breast-cancer-research.aspx</a>
July 10, 201 LOI	Target Identification in Lupus (TIL) grants	Alliance for Lupus Research (ALR)	<a href="http://www.lupusresearch.org/research/grants.html">http://www.lupusresearch.org/research/grants.html</a>
July 13, 2012 LOI	Multi-Investigator Research Initiative: original, promising and transformative projects for discovering commonalities between nervous system diseases and conditions, which can be exploited to develop new strategies for prevention, diagnosis and treatment	Brain Canada - Canada Brain Research Fund	<a href="http://www.braincanada.ca/files/MIRI_RFA_EN.pdf">http://www.braincanada.ca/files/MIRI_RFA_EN.pdf</a>
July 22, 2012 LOI	Identifying Health Outcomes Associated with Changes in Use of Illicit Drugs	National Institutes of Health	<a href="http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-DA-13-007.html">http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-DA-13-007.html</a>
August 1, 2012	Cystic Fibrosis Research Grants	Cystic Fibrosis Canada	<a href="http://www.cysticfibrosis.ca/en-research/researchgrants.php">http://www.cysticfibrosis.ca/en-research/researchgrants.php</a>
August 13, 2012	Vasculitis Foundation Research Program	Vasculitis Foundation	<a href="http://www.vasculitisfoundation.org/research">http://www.vasculitisfoundation.org/research</a>
August 20, 2012	American Epilepsy Society Grants for Innovative, Collaborative Research	American Epilepsy Society	<a href="http://www.aesnet.org/go/research/aes-sponsored-grant/research-initiative-awards">http://www.aesnet.org/go/research/aes-sponsored-grant/research-initiative-awards</a>
August 30, 2012	Grants-in-Aid	Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada	<a href="http://www.hsf.ca/research/en/grants-aid">http://www.hsf.ca/research/en/grants-aid</a>
September 1, 2012	Dermal Tissue Grants and Established Investigator Grants	Musculoskeletal Transplant Foundation	<a href="http://www.mtf.org/research_grant_programs.html">http://www.mtf.org/research_grant_programs.html</a>
September 5, 2012 3 p.m.	Grand Challenges Canada	International Development Research Centre and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research	<a href="http://www.grandchallenges.ca/grand-challenges/gc1-stars/stars-program-information/">http://www.grandchallenges.ca/grand-challenges/gc1-stars/stars-program-information/</a>
September 15, 2012, 4 p.m.	Capital Health Research Fund	Capital Health Research Services	<a href="http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/discovery-innovation/research-fund-competiton">http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/discovery-innovation/research-fund-competiton</a>

# Research resources...

## *ICH-GCP Training for Investigators*

Health Canada Inspectors request that investigators and research staff working on clinical trials involving drugs receive training on the applicable regulations (Division 5) and the International Conference on Harmonization: Good Clinical Practices (ICH-GCP). In the course of inspections they have requested documentation of training. To meet this need, Janet Gallant, Program Manager, Research Education, is offering the following training sessions upon request:

ICH-GCP Overview and Investigator Responsibilities (1 hour)

Division 5 Regulations and ICH-GCP Highlights (1 hour)

If you would like to have either or both of these training sessions provided to you and/or your research team at your chosen time and location, please contact:

Janet Gallant (902) 473-2118      janet.gallant@cdha.nshealth.ca

## *Planning and Development*

The Planning and Development office is working to grow the quality and quantity of the research enterprise at Capital Health. Development and Planning contacts:

Julia Taylor (902) 473-2273      julia.taylor@cdha.nshealth.ca

Shane Grant (902) 473-3829      shane.grant@cdha.nshealth.ca

## *Research Methods Unit*

### **Submitting a grant application in the Fall?**

Are you submitting a research funding application in the fall and need methods support for your project? Our consultants are available to work up front at no charge with teams who are preparing funding proposals that include budget lines for methods support. Consultants will provide review and advice on your methods, and RMU will supply a letter of support and a quote for inclusion in the application as part of that process. If the project receives funding, the expectation is that RMU will then be contracted to do the work for which we quoted. We tend to get very busy in the weeks prior to grant deadlines. If you would like RMU support, now is the time to book a consult! Contact us at [www.cdha.nshealth.ca/rmu](http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/rmu)



## *Clinical Research Unit*

Researchers now have access to a 5,400 square-foot, state-of-the-art Clinical Research Unit (CRU), located at the IWK Health Centre, for inpatient and outpatient research needs. Visit the CCFV website at [www.centerforvaccinology.ca](http://www.centerforvaccinology.ca) for more information and a photo tour of the unit. All inquiries are welcomed. If you would like to tour the CRU and find out more about its services, please contact:

Cathy Brown (902) 470-7015      catherine.brown@iwk.nshealth.ca

## *Research in Progress*

This newsletter is produced by Research Services. You can view it on the Capital Health website:

<http://www.cdha.nshealth.ca/discovery-innovation/research-progress-newsletter>

Please direct inquiries, comments and/or items for insertion in the newsletter to:

Emily Walker (902) 473-5156      emily.walker@cdha.nshealth.ca

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