

ADDITIONAL FILE 3

QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR QUALITATIVE STUDIES – Based on criteria developed by Walsh and Downe (2006)

Ref ID: _____
Author: _____
Year: _____
Reviewer: _____

COMPONENT RATINGS

A) SCOPE AND PURPOSE

(E1) Clear statement of, and rationale for, research question/aims/purposes

No Yes

- Clarity of focus demonstrated
- Explicit purpose given, such as descriptive/explanatory intent, theory building, hypothesis testing
- Link between research and existing knowledge demonstrated

(E2) Study thoroughly contextualized by existing literature

No Yes

- Evidence of systematic approach to literature review, location of literature to contextualize the findings, or both

RATE THIS SECTION <small>See dictionary</small>	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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B) DESIGN

(E1) Method/design apparent, and consistent with research intent

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Rationale given for use of qualitative design
- Discussion of epistemological/ontological grounding
- Rationale explored for specific qualitative method (e.g. ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology)
- Discussion of why particular method chosen is most appropriate/sensitive/relevant for research question/aims
- Setting appropriate

(E2) Data collection strategy apparent and appropriate

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Were data collection methods appropriate for type of data required and for specific qualitative method?
- Were they likely to capture the complexity/diversity of experience and illuminate context in sufficient detail?

- Was triangulation of data sources used if appropriate?

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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C) SAMPLING STRATEGY

(E1) Sample and sampling method appropriate

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Selection criteria detailed, and description of how sampling was undertaken
- Justification for sampling strategy given
- Thickness of description likely to be achieved from sampling
- Any disparity between planned and actual sample explained

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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D) ANALYSIS

(E1) Analytic approach appropriate

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Approach made explicit (e.g. Thematic distillation, constant comparative method, grounded theory)
- Was it appropriate for the qualitative method chosen?
- Was data managed by software package or by hand and why?
- Discussion of how coding systems/conceptual frameworks evolved
- How was context of data retained during analysis
- Evidence that the subjective meanings of participants were portrayed
- Evidence of more than one researcher involved in stages if appropriate to epistemological/theoretical stance
- Did research participants have any involvement in analysis (e.g. member checking)
- Evidence provided that data reached saturation or discussion/rationale if it did not
- Evidence that deviant data was sought, or discussion/rationale if it was not

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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E) INTERPRETATION

(E1) Context described and taken account of in interpretation

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Description of social/physical and interpersonal contexts of data collection
- Evidence that researcher spent time ‘dwelling with the data’, interrogating it for competing/alternative explanations of phenomena

(E2) Clear audit trail given

No Yes

Specific prompt

- Sufficient discussion of research processes such that others can follow ‘decision trail’

(E3) Data used to support interpretation

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Extensive use of field notes entries/verbatim interview quotes in discussion of findings
- Clear exposition of how interpretation led to conclusions

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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F) REFLEXIVITY

(E1) Researcher reflexivity demonstrated

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Discussion of relationship between researcher and participants during fieldwork
- Demonstration of researcher’s influence on stages of research process
- Evidence of self-awareness/insight
- Documentation of effects of the research on researcher
- Evidence of how problems/complications met were dealt with

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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G) ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

(E1) Demonstration of sensitivity to ethical concerns

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Ethical committee approval granted
- Clear commitment to integrity, honesty, transparency, equality and mutual respect in relationships with participants
- Evidence of fair dealing with all research participants
- Recording of dilemmas met and how resolved in relation to ethical issues
- Documentation of how autonomy, consent, confidentiality, anonymity were managed

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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H) RELEVANCE AND TRANSFERABILITY

(E1) Relevance and transferability evident

No Yes

Specific prompts

- Sufficient evidence for typicality specificity to be assessed
- Analysis interwoven with existing theories and other relevant explanatory literature drawn from similar settings and studies
- Discussion of how explanatory propositions/emergent theory may fit other contexts
- Limitations/weaknesses of study clearly outlined
- Clearly resonates with other knowledge and experience
- Results/conclusions obviously supported by evidence
- Interpretation plausible and ‘makes sense’
- Provides new insights and increases understanding
- Significance for current policy and practice outlined
- Assessment of value/empowerment for participants
- Outlines further directions for investigation
- Comment on whether aims/purposes of research were achieved

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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Global rating

COMPONENT RATINGS

Please transcribe the information from the gray boxed on pages 1-4 onto this page

A SELECTION BIAS

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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B STUDY DESIGN

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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C CONFOUNDERS

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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D BLINDING

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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E DATA COLLECTION METHODS

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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F WITHDRAWALS AND DROPOUTS

RATE THIS SECTION See dictionary	STRONG 1	MODERATE 2	WEAK 3
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GLOBAL RATING FOR THIS PATER (circle one)

- | | | |
|---|----------|---|
| 1 | STRONG | (four STRONG ratings with no WEAK ratings) |
| 2 | MODERATE | (less than four STRONG ratings and one WEAK rating) |
| 3 | WEAK | (two or more WEAK ratings) |

With both reviewers discussing the ratings?"

Is there a discrepancy between the two reviewers with respect to the component (A-F) ratings?

No Yes

If yes, indicate the reason for discrepancy

- 1 Oversight
- 2 Differences in interpretation of criteria
- 3 Differences in interpretation of study

Final decision of both reviewers (circle one):

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1 | STRONG |
| 2 | MODERATE |
| 3 | WEAK |