

Table S1. Qualitative Research Review Guidelines (RATS) checklist.

Qualitative Research Review Guidelines – RATS ¹		
Ask this of the manuscript	This should be included in the manuscript	Where item has been addressed
R – Relevance of study design		
Is research question interesting?	Research question explicitly stated	Question provided on page 1 and objectives provided on pages 2 and 6
Is research question relevant to clinical practice, public health, or policy?	Research question justified and linked to the existing knowledge base (empirical research, theory, policy)	Pages 2 through to 6
A – Appropriateness of qualitative method		
Is qualitative methodology the best approach for the study aims? <i>Interviews:</i> experience, perceptions, behavior, practice, process <i>Focus groups:</i> group dynamics, convenience, non-sensitive topics <i>Ethnography:</i> culture, organizational behavior, interaction <i>Textual analysis:</i> documents, art, representations, conversations	Study design described and justified e.g., why was a particular method (i.e., interviews) chosen?	Pages 6 through to 8
T – transparency of procedures		
Sampling Are the participants selected the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study? Is the sampling strategy appropriate?	Criteria for selecting the study sample justified and explained <i>theoretical:</i> based on pre conceived or emergent theory <i>purposive:</i> diversity of opinion <i>volunteer:</i> feasibility, hard-to-reach groups	Page 8
Recruitment Was recruitment conducted using appropriate methods? Is the sampling strategy appropriate? Could there be selection bias?	Details of how recruitment was conducted and by whom Details of who chose not to participate and why	Pages 6 through to 8 Pages 6 through to 8

<i>Data collection</i> Was collection of data systematic and comprehensive?	Method (s) outlined and examples given (e.g., interview questions)	Page 7, Appendix Figure 1A and Appendix Table 2A
Are characteristics of study group and setting clear?	Study group and setting clearly described	Page 6 and 7
Why and when was data collection stopped, and is this reasonable?	End of data collection justified and described	Page 7
<i>Role of researchers</i> Is the researcher(s) appropriate?	Do the researchers occupy dual roles (clinician and researcher)?	Page 10 and 11
How might they bias (good and bad) the conduct of the study and results?	Are the ethics of this discussed? Do the researcher(s) critically examine their own influence on the formulation of the research question, data collection, and interpretation?	Page 23
<i>Ethics</i> Was informed consent sought and granted?	Informed consent process explicitly and clearly detailed	Page 8
Were participants' anonymity and confidentiality ensured?	Anonymity and confidentiality discussed	Page 8
Was approval from an appropriate ethics committee received?	Ethics approval cited	Page 8
S - Soundness of interpretive approach		
<i>Analysis</i> Is the type of analysis appropriate for the type of study? <i>Thematic:</i> exploratory, descriptive, hypothesis generating <i>Framework:</i> e.g. policy <i>Constant comparison/grounded theory:</i> theory generating, analytical	Analytic approach described in depth and justified Indicators of quality: Description of how themes were developed from the data (inductive or deductive) Evidence of alternative explanations being sought Analysis and presentation of negative or deviant cases Description of the basis on which quotes were chosen Semi-quantification when appropriate Illumination of context and/or meaning, richly detailed	Pages 8 through to 10 Pages 8 through to 10, Appendix Table 3A, 4A and 5A Table 3 and Appendix Table 5A
Are the interpretations clearly presented and adequately supported by the evidence?		
Are quotes used and are these appropriate and effective?		

Was trustworthiness/reliability of the data and interpretations checked?	Method of reliability check described and justified e.g., was an audit trail, triangulation, or member checking employed? Did an independent analyst review data and contest themes? How were disagreements resolved?	Pages 8 through to 10 and Appendix Table 4A
<i>Discussion and presentation</i> Are findings sufficiently grounded in a theoretical or conceptual framework?	Findings presented with reference to existing theoretical and empirical literature, and how they contribute	Pages 18 through to 22
Is adequate account taken of previous knowledge and how the findings add?	Strengths and limitations explicitly described and discussed	Pages 22 and 23
Are the limitations thoughtfully considered?	Evidence following guidelines (format, word count)	Pages 1 through to 29 and Title page
Is the manuscript well written and accessible?	Detail of methods or additional quotes, contained in appendix Written for a health sciences audience	Appendix
Are red flags present?	Grounded theory; not a simple content analysis but a complex, sociological, theory generating approach <i>Jargon</i> : descriptions that are trite or jargon filled should be viewed skeptically <i>Over interpretation</i> : interpretation must be grounded in "accounts" and semi-quantified if possible or appropriate <i>Seems anecdotal, self-evident</i> : may be a superficial analysis, not rooted in conceptual framework or linked to previous knowledge, and lacking depth	-

*Consent process thinly
discussed:* may not have met
ethics requirements

Doctor-researcher: consider the
ethical implications for patients
and the bias in data
collection and interpretation

¹The RATS guidelines modified for BioMed Central are copyright Jocalyn Clark, BMJ. They can be found in Clark JP: **How to peer review a qualitative manuscript**. In *Peer Review Health Sciences*. Second edition. Edited by Godlee F, Jefferson T. London: BMJ Books; 2003:219-235