



# Journal of the Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Respiratory Care

## A guide to writing up a qualitative study

Qualitative studies use rigorous methodologies to collect usually textual data but this could also include images. These studies are usually more concerned with the 'why' rather than the 'what' or 'how' type research questions and are chosen when exploring experiences and/or perceptions of a phenomenon. The data that is collected is rich in depth and can help develop evidence in a novel area.

Articles should normally be no longer than 2000 words.

The information below provides detail to be included in each section of the article.

### **Title**

The title should identify the research design, the topic being studied and the type of participants.

e.g. Exploring experiences of physical activity in people with chronic respiratory disease: a qualitative study

### **Abstract**

The abstract should provide:

- a brief overview of the objective;
- a brief description of the research design used;
- the setting of the study e.g. home, primary/secondary care;
- brief selection criteria for participants;
- a description of the main results
- The overall conclusions of the study

### **Introduction**

The introduction should include a background to the topic being studied including any previous relevant research with gaps /weaknesses identified. A justification should be provided of the qualitative approach chosen.

### **Methods**

This section should provide a clear description to the reader about what you actually did.

- Participants: where were they recruited and how were they selected.
- A detailed description of the method used e.g. interview/focus group
- A detailed description of how the data was handled e.g. transcription, verification.



- A detailed description of how the data was analysed
- A description of how rigour of data collection was achieved
- Ethical and/or R&D approval details (see section on ethical approval below for details).

### **Results**

This section should provide both the results of the data analysis and example data items that characterise the main themes or ideas.

Quotations should be written in italics with double quotation marks. No individual participant should be identified.

*“ well... I used to enjoy walking to the shops. I met people there” [Female 3]*

### **Discussion and conclusion**

The first paragraph should summarise the main findings of the study. The findings should then be discussed in relations to previous research and clinical relevance. Areas of weakness and limitations e.g. bias, method, sample should be discussed. Strengths of the study should be discussed and recommendations for further study made.

### **Key points**

Three key points should provide the reader with the value of the study.

### **Acknowledgements**

Acknowledgements should be provided for anyone who was not an author but helped in the preparation of the article.

### **Funding**

Funding of the study needs to be acknowledged preferably worded as follows. Either: ‘This work was supported by [name of funder] grant number [xxx]’ or ‘This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors’. You must ensure that the full, correct details of your funder(s) and any relevant grant numbers are included.

### **Ethical and R&D approval**

Approval for use of an individual’s data must be gained from relevant sources. If your manuscript contains any individual person’s data in any form (including individual details, images or videos), consent for publication must be obtained from that person, or in the case of children, their parent or legal guardian.



Trust/Health Board R&D approval and if necessary NHS research ethics approval must be documented. If the study was part of an academic award, confirmation of University ethical approval is also required.

If your manuscript does not contain data from any individual person, please state “Not applicable” in this section.

## References

These should be referenced using the Harvard system. You are responsible for accurate referencing.

In the text, use the name and year system e.g. As Black and White (1987) have shown..., as already reported (Black and White, 1987)... For three or more authors print the first author’s name followed by et al e.g. as Black et al (1987) have shown...

When several references are cited simultaneously, the order should be chronological e.g. Black et al 1997, White and Smith 1987.

In the reference list arrange references alphabetically by first author’s surname. Print the names and initials of all authors for references with six or fewer authors; for seven or more authors print the first three and add ‘et al’.

The sequence **for a journal article** is: author(s); year; title; journal; volume; first and last page numbers. The layout and punctuation are e.g.

Gosselink, R. 2004 Breathing techniques in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). *Chronic Respiratory Disease* 1(3): pp163-172.

**For online journals** i.e. those that are only available on-line or those in press and available online:

Merchant, A.T. 2007. Diet, physical activity, and adiposity in children in poor and rich neighbourhoods: a cross-sectional comparison. *Nutrition Journal* [Online] 6. Available at: <http://www.nutritionj.com/content/pdf/1475-2891-6-1.pdf> [Accessed:10 May 2013].

The sequence, layout and punctuation **for books** are:

West, J.B. 2012 *Respiratory Physiology* 9<sup>th</sup> Edition Philadelphia: Wolters Kluwer Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

**For a chapter** within an edited book:

Samuels, B. 1979 Pulmonary complications of AIDS. In: Rand, A. and Long, B. eds. *Management of AIDS*. London: Butterworth, pp 387-95



The total number of references should not exceed 20.

## **General formatting of the document for submission**

### **Font and spacing**

All text is Calibri and fully justified.

Title: bold 16pt, 1.5 spacing

Authors, keywords and correspondence: 12pt, all headings bold

Abstract:

- Sub-headings: 14pt, bold, italic
- Text: 12pt, single spaced, italic

Main body of article:

- Headings: bold 14pt,
- Text: 12pt, double spacing
- Any further subheadings within sections: italic

Fig and table titles: 12pt

Note for insert figure/table: bold, italic, capital, red 12pt.

All pages must be numbered

### **Title page**

All submissions should include a title page as the first page of the document. This page must include the following information:

- Title of the article
- The names and initials of each author & institutional affiliation of each author.
- Name, e-mail address and telephone number of the author responsible for correspondence.
- Please provide up to 5 keywords that summarise the major themes of your article.
- Word count (excluding abstract)

### **Abbreviations and units**

Abbreviations should be defined at their first mention. SI units should always be used.

For numbers: all numbers under 10 should be written as words except when describing a quantity e.g. PaO<sub>2</sub> 8.5Kpa. Numbers greater than 10 should be written as digits, except at the start of a sentence.



## Tables and Illustrations

Tables and illustrations should be sent in separate files. Do not paste figures and tables into the text. Photography and images should be in black and white. Supply images at highest resolution obtainable from source. Do not reduce the file size.

If previously published, acknowledge the original source. It is the author's responsibility to ensure that permission is received from the copyright holder for the reproduction of figures and tables before submission (search for 'permissions' on the publisher's website).

References, explanatory matter and definitions of abbreviations should be explained in a key below the table.

Ensure that each table and figure are cited in the text.

Describe where the table should sit within the text e.g.

**\*\*\*\*\*TABLE 1 NEAR HERE\*\*\*\*\***

or

**\*\*\*\*\*FIGURE 2 NEAR HERE\*\*\*\*\***

## Submission

Word documents should be submitted online at

[http://www.acprc.org.uk/publications/acprc\\_journal.asp](http://www.acprc.org.uk/publications/acprc_journal.asp)

or emailed to [journaleditor@acprc.org.uk](mailto:journaleditor@acprc.org.uk) with the files named as follows:

- Main document: Author, date of submission, title of paper e.g. Smith011206Bronchiectasis
- Tables: Author, date of submission, title of Table e.g. Smith011206Table1
- Figures: Author, date of submission, title of figure e.g. Smith011206Figure1