

Qualitative inquiries in health care contexts of diverse disciplinary frontiers

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Qualitative research is a broad and evolving methodological field that encompasses a variety of approaches, as well as multiple perspectives on the nature of the research itself, how reality is understood, how data is generated, and how researchers engage with their research and participants. ⁽¹⁾

In this way, it is an approach to understand, describe, explain, interpret and unveil the life of human beings from an individual, group and collective perspective, without losing the link with the context, historical, social and political events. It also outlines society, daily life, living and everyday life, while at the same time it can show the complexity of life and the multiple relationships that sustain it. ⁽²⁾

On the other hand, qualitative research extends the horizons of thinking as researchers, in that everyone becomes an active part of the research, being immersed in each project, constituting the research and, at the same time, being constituted by it. ⁽³⁾ In these methodological approaches, from academia, researchers focus their efforts on making visible everyday problems associated with injustices that, for various reasons, have remained present in the lives of people and, at the same time, absent from the hegemonic political discourses in the contexts under investigation. In doing so, they manage to represent the voices of oppressed people and communities, giving them a voice that is validated by academic research. ⁽⁴⁾

Social changes have been studied from different qualitative perspectives, which are present in the investigation of social justice, human rights, civil rights, experiences in illness, grief, social participation, which enriches the understanding of the phenomena. ⁽⁵⁾

These issues are inevitably intersected by class, gender and ethno-racial issues, which allow us to approach in depth and generate situated knowledge that can be understood in the broader international context of and for Latin America.

Qualitative researchers use a variety of scientific, humanistic, artistic and other disciplinary approaches. In this sense, qualitative research can be considered an academic, situated and creative praxis. ⁽⁶⁾

According to Saldaña, researchers need to be able to think analytically, symbolically, imaginatively, and metaphorically. ⁽⁷⁾ Research from this methodological approach is a rigorous and laborious process, requiring the production of large amounts of data for analysis and constant attention to the ethical handling of information. It is also a creative process that allows researchers to experiment, play, adapt, learn and grow along the way. ⁽⁷⁾

In the case of the researchers participating in this dossier, this has a Latin American perspective that responds to a moment of change -product of the social movements of recent years-

and seeks to identify common voices that participate in dialogues that address the problems from the continent and disseminate them to the world.

In this context, the researchers gathered at the Summer School on Qualitative Methodologies for Social Transformation in the Border Zone—which takes place every year at the University of Tarapacá in Chile—have presented their work in the journal. Social and health professionals vindicate qualitative methodology and reflect on the value of building a community of practice among qualitative researchers.

The researchers have adopted the knowledge acquired internationally to apply it to their work and research environments, reflecting on their political, social, historical and cultural contexts from the epistemological, disciplinary and methodological frontiers that are imbricated in their research. In this academic space of encounters, dialogues and reflections that is the Summer School, an identity has been identified, based on the common interests of the researchers, as well as their constant search to adopt and redefine ways of researching with Latin American communities.

At the same time, the Summer School allows to strengthen a common discourse, to identify a voice with a Latin American identity, which is now thought and defined in border territory, that of the Universidad de Tarapacá, a state university whose life takes place in the extreme north of Chile, precisely in a space of mobility and cultural exchanges typical of the tri-border of Chile, Peru and Bolivia, in the central-south Andean macro-region.

The papers in this dossier legitimize how qualitative research explores people's perceptions and feelings about the dynamics that support decision making, accessing spaces that are not appropriate for other research practices.

Like all the articles in *Enfermería: Cuidados Humanizados*, this dossier seeks to motivate educators in the human, social and health sciences in the use of this methodology. As FitzPatrick writes, although educational research has its foundations in the social sciences, it is also grounded in the humanities, since it works with the relationships between people and society.⁽⁸⁾ In this logic, qualitative research has a relevant place in educational research, while in health education research the principles of the humanities must be present since health science professionals deal with and communicate with people.⁽⁸⁾

In this sense, this dossier, which includes research presented at the VI Summer School on Qualitative Methodologies for Social Transformation in the Border Zone, seeks to disseminate research findings and, at the same time, provide methodological tools developed and rethought for the Latin American context.

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