Case Studies

# Chapter 21: Rigour

Simone and Darren the case study students are considering strategies to promote the rigour of their studies

Simone is exploring the effect of a new non-pharmacological intervention to reduce perineal discomfort following episiotomy by comparing this with conventional treatment. Simone will be using a between participants post-test only design. The study will be undertaken at one NHS maternity hospital. Simone will recruit newly delivered mothers who have had an episiotomy. The mothers will be randomised to either receive the new non-pharmacological intervention or the conventional treatment. Wound healing will be monitored by hospital and community midwives. To measure perineal discomfort, the mothers will also be asked to complete three questionnaires; the first at 3 days after delivery, the second at one week and the third two weeks after delivery. What ethical factors should Simone address before she can begin her study?

Suggest strategies that Simone could employ to promote the rigour of her study.

**To reveal the answer toggle the show/hide button (¶) or press Control + Shift + 8.**

* Use an audit trail
* Ensure she has the required skills to undertake recruitment, data collection and data analysis
* Develop a strategy whereby Simone is notified of mothers who meet the study inclusion criteria.
* Ensure a robust randomisation process is undertaken. Ideally, this should not be done by Simone.
* Use a previously validated tool to assess wound healing.
* Ensure all midwives are competent to use the wound healing assessment tool and document the findings.
* Establish the content and face validity of the questionnaire by having it scrutinised by experts in the field, Simone’s research supervisor, colleagues, peers or people with the same characteristics as the participants in the proposed study
* Use a previously validated questionnaire
* Ensure the questionnaire has clear and comprehensive instructions for the participant
* Assess the reliability of the questionnaire
* Facilitate the return of the questionnaires
* Conduct a pilot study
* Carry out an assessment of the study’s fidelity

Darren wants to explore the lived experience of teenage girls who have anorexia. He will use purposive sampling to recruit participants via an out-patient clinic at a local hospital. Darren is going to conduct semi-structured qualitative interviews using a topic guide with participants about their anorexia. The interviews will either be conducted at the participants’ homes or at the study site. The interview recordings will be transcribed by an authorised external agency.

Suggest strategies that Darren could employ to promote the rigour of his study

**To reveal the answer toggle the show/hide button (¶) or press Control + Shift + 8.**

* Using an audit trail
* Ensure he has the required skills to undertake recruitment, data collection and data analysis
* Consider whether there are any factors that might inadvertently influence the findings of the study.
* Develop a strategy whereby Darren is notified of potential participants who meet the study inclusion criteria.
* Being reflexive by reflecting throughout the study using a contemporaneously recorded reflective diary
* Recruiting participants and collecting data until data saturation is achieved
* Having the topic guide scrutinized by experts in the field, his research supervisor, colleagues or peers
* Involve participants in checking the analysed data
* Auditing interviews transcribed by a third party to confirm the accuracy