Qualitative Research Critique

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Research Critique

The development of nursing practice is dependent on the advancement of new knowledge, which is facilitated by new research. Evidence-based practice is an important part of nursing as it helps to ensure that the promotion of healthcare is based on valid and applicable information. To determine the validity, credibility, and applicability of research information, it is required that a research critique is conducted to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the study and how they affect the applicability of the research (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2017). The following is a critique of the article “*Experiences of diabetes self‐management: a focus group study among Australians with type 2 diabetes*” by Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015). The critique analyses the study’s background, methodology, results, and the ethical considerations made by the researchers.

**Background of the Study**

The study by Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015) was based in Australia where approximately a million people have been diagnosed with diabetes. The rate of diabetes in Australia has more than doubled in the past four decades. Among all the diabetes cases in the country, 85% of them are Type 2 diabetes cases, which are mainly caused by lifestyle decisions. Some of the risk factors for Type 2 diabetes include old age, obesity, sedentary lifestyle, ethnicity, and low socio-economic status. People with more than one risk factor have a higher chance of getting Type 2 diabetes at some point in their life. Diabetes self-management is an important part of proper diabetes care. Patients are expected to understand the strategies that they should take for glycemic control and to change the lifestyle conditions that contribute to diabetes. However, people in the low socio-economic conditions may lack the resources and services to properly manage their condition. Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015) identified the diabetes issue within the Australian population and developed a study that aimed to determine the treatment and care experiences of type 2 diabetes mellitus patients with reference to access to services and resources. The study was based in a low socio-economic rea where the people are likely to have trouble accessing the resources they need to properly care for their illness. The following are the research questions that this study was designed to answer.

* What are the experiences of a diabetes patient in a low socio-economic setting?
* How does diabetes affect a patient and their family?
* What difficulties do diabetes in low socio-economic areas experience?

The purpose and the research questions of this study relate to the study problem because they are focused on the difficulties that the low socio-economic groups in Australia experience. The problem identified that there is a large number of people in Australia with type 2 diabetes and the people in the low-socio economic groups have a higher risk of having diabetes.

**Method of Study**

The study was conducted using an exploratory qualitative research design. The research data was collected in the form of focus groups made up of a population of 22 people aged between 40 and 70 years, with type 2 diabetes. There was different focus groups ranging from four to eight participants each where the data was recorded, transcribed, and later analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. Although Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015) do not create the exact framework to demonstrate the use of grounded theory, the research process shows that they used a valid process of research.

The qualitative methods that have been used in this study were appropriate in studying the research questions. This was an exploratory study, meaning that there was no definite hypothesis that the researchers were investigating. Therefore, investigating the research problem with a focus group was a good technique of identifying a variety of information, which was later used in the development of the themes.

In developing this study, Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015) cited various qualitative and quantitative research sources to enhance the validity of the claims that have been made in the study. The sources that have been cited tend to include both recent and slightly old studies. The oldest research cited by the authors was published in 1999, while the most recent was published in 2015. However, the older researches used in this study are only focused on developing the methodology. The literature review of the article only focuses on the more recent studies, which are a more accurate representation of developed facts at the time of the development of the article. As for the older citations, it is highly unlikely that research methods have changed too much to affect the validity of the information included by the researcher. In general, the literature review developed in this study builds a valid argument. It shows the gap in understanding the struggles that low income type 2 diabetes patients undergo and the need for new information to develop better care for the poorer diabetes patients in Australia. The research does not list the limitations that were experienced in the research process.

**Results of Study**

From the data collected from the focus groups, various themes were developed. These themes include the patients’ personal journey, diabetes as a silent disease, the access to services and resources, and the work of managing diabetes. The researchers found that diabetes patients experience emotional, physical, and social challenges. This study highlighted the impact that diabetes has on the individual and their family and the importance of having a family support system to assist in the self-management efforts. The study concluded that the participants were generally satisfied with their current care but there was a clear need for self-management education to provide additional information on the understanding of this condition.

The results of this study have some implications on the development of nursing practice and nursing research. This study has demonstrated that people in the low socio-economic environments have unique challenges that need to be addressed to improve the quality of service and care that they receive. This was an exploratory study; hence, it can be used as a basis for more in-depth studies that investigate the specific themes that have been identified. Possibly, this can help in the development of new information that can improve diabetes self-management.

**Ethical Considerations**

Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015) took various steps to make sure that their study was ethical. This study was reviewed by an IRB and was approved before its commencement. The ethical consideration that has been made in the study is the protection of the privacy of the participants. The researchers used pseudonyms in place of the real identities of the participants to protect their privacy. Additionally, the researchers obtained a written consent from the participants before they participated in the focus groups. The participants voluntarily left their details and results of the study were mailed to them after the completion of the analysis.

**Conclusion**

The study by Carolan, Holman, and Ferrari (2015) has utilized some relevant quantitative techniques to ensure that the study is valid and applicable. The study has a clear aim and uses valid qualitative techniques to meet the research objectives. Valid research sources and methodology has been used in performing this research. From this analysis, it is clear that this is a valid study that can be applied in developing new knowledge for nursing practice. Through the study, one can develop new researches that can help to develop self-management care for diabetic patients.

References

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