

# Foundations of qualitative and quantitative methods

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Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Nursing Research Methods Qualitative and quantitative methods are used individually or together in many nursing studies. Both methods are efficient and enhance the quality of conclusions depending on the type of study, nature of the data and the source of information. A qualitative method relies on analysis of theoretical information to make conclusions. A quantitative method uses numerical information to identify important characteristics such as trends, vulnerability and health demand. If these methods are used together, the outcome will be a comprehensive explanation of relationships among variables (Gerrish & Lathlean, 2015). The outcome is sufficient actionable conclusions.

Qualitative method provides a greater insight into the behavior of people that contributes towards healthy or unhealthy population. The method often uses case studies and observation of a population. For example, a study on HIV on a particular community may use the qualitative method to identify behaviors that increase the prevalence of the disease in the population under study. A quantitative method would supplement the qualitative method by availing the statistical part. The method gives a better presentation of conclusions in numerical form, shows trends and demographics of a population. In the above example of a study on HIV, quantitative method is important in showing aspects such as number of vulnerable persons, high-risk ages, and the economic cost of the disease.

In conclusion, the above illustration shows that a nursing research provides better and actionable conclusions when both qualitative and quantitative methods are used. Whereas qualitative methods provide a theoretical perspective of a phenomenon, the quantitative method avails data evidence

to enhance the viability and reliability of the results. However, using both methods is complex, time-consuming and requires expertise in theory and statistics.

#### Reference

Gerrish, K., & Lathlean, J. (2015). *The Research Process in Nursing*. Hoboken: Wiley.