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Qualitative research data collection in the context of the new coronavirus pandemic

A coleta de dados da pesquisa qualitativa no contexto da pandemia do novo coronavírus

Recolección de datos de investigación cualitativa en el contexto de la pandemia del nuevo coronavirus

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Corresponding Author:

Ernandes Gonçalves Dias

ernandesgdias@yahoo.com.br

Avenida José Alves Miranda, 500, Alto São João,
Mato Verde, MG, Brasil.

Ernandes Gonçalves Dias¹ 

¹ Faculdade Verde Norte (Favenorte), Mato Verde, MG, Brasil.

Dear Editor:

Since the identification of a new coronavirus and the declaration of a pandemic caused by it, the application of data collection techniques in qualitative research has been adapted because research of a qualitative nature requires the researcher to approach and immerse in the fact/phenomenon in study. Thus, this text is eminently theoretical and reflective on data collection for qualitative research in the Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic scenario.

Qualitative research is a tool commonly used by researchers in the human, social and health sciences in the search for translating the understanding of facts and phenomena to attribute meaning to people's experiences.¹

Qualitative researches have as essential characteristics the fact that the environment where the facts/phenomena occur is the source for data collection; the researcher as an instrument for surveying the empirical; the descriptive character of a reality; the search for the symbology/meaning of facts/phenomena in people's lives; and the inductive approach in the analysis of the material collected.²

For this, the qualitative researcher predominantly uses as techniques for data collection the interviews, observations, field diary and document analysis³, as well, focus group, collective subject discourse, Delphi method, ethnography, among others.⁴ These techniques are best performed when the researcher is immersed in the universe of data collection.

Thus, the process of capturing empirical data in qualitative research requires a certain contact and immersion of the researcher with the facts and phenomena under investigation, so it is quite common for the researcher to be the data collector himself/herself, whether as an observer or participant in the circumstances in which facts and phenomena develop in their natural environment.

The researcher's immersion in the universe of the phenomenon/fact where the data is collected is fundamental so that, for example, as he/she captures the data, theorizes and already triggers an initial interpretation, which often guides the process of data collection itself.

However, in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collection of qualitative research data may, in some way, have been affected due to the collection of empirical material from these studies being frequently carried

out by remote means, especially in the early periods of the pandemic.

The remote means used to collect empirical material can limit the researcher's immersion in the research universe and perhaps limit the researcher's perception and interpretation of the research problem. It happens because while the research subject speaks and interacts in his/her natural environment, in a condition of in person search for data, it is possible for the researcher, hypothetically, to validate the subject's discourse.

Keywords: *Qualitative Research. Data Analysis. Coronavirus Infections. COVID-19.*

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Ernandes Gonçalves Dias contributed to the conception, design, analysis and writing of the manuscript. The author approved the manuscript's final version for publication and is responsible for all aspects of the study, including assurance of precision and integrity. The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.