

Guide to Reading Research Articles

What is the purpose of the study?	
Does the purpose of the study relate to an important problem?	
Qualitative	Quantitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the purpose translated into a clearly worded research question appropriate for a qualitative study? • Does the research question offer insight into and ask questions about social, emotional and experiential phenomenon to determine the meaning of "X" or about the attitudes, beliefs or behavior of a group or individuals? • Is the purpose inductive from the experience? • How was theory considered? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the purpose translated into a clearly worded hypothesis or (guiding) research question(s) appropriate for a quantitative study? • Does it describe or imply a relationship among phenomenon using systematic, objective and empirical methods? • Is the purpose deduced from an adequate review of the literature? • Is a theoretical perspective identified? • What problem or gap in our knowledge is being addressed by this research study? Has the problem been clearly stated in the article? • Is the problem important? Why? To Whom?
How was the purpose investigated?	
Was the question studied in a credible and rigorous manner?	
Qualitative	Quantitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the sampling strategy appropriate to address the research question[s]? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Purposeful selection? - Flexibility in sampling process? - Ethics procedure? - Saturation of data? • Was the paradigm/research strategy [ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, PAR, other] appropriate for the research question? • Were the data collected in a way that addresses the research question[s]? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a clear and complete description of site participants? - Is there a clear description of methods used [observation, interviews, focus groups, other] - Are the role of the researcher and relationship with participants clearly described? - Are the assumptions and biases of researcher identified? - Is the data representative of the "whole" picture? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the sampling strategy appropriate to address the hypothesis or research question[s]? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informed consent obtained? - Inclusion and exclusion criteria identified? - Bias minimized? - Sample size and power? • Was the research design appropriate for addressing the hypothesis or research questions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type of design? - Subject assignment to groups? - Randomization used? - Control group used? - Independent variable[s] identified? - Dependent variable[s] identified? - Variables operationally defined? • Were data collection procedures designed to limit bias and address the stated hypothesis or research questions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instrumentation used identified? - Instrumentation described in detail for replication - Instrument validity and reliability documented? - Type of data collected identified [nominal, ordinal, ratio or interval]? - Dependent variables are appropriate outcome measures - Internal and external validity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it clear how the categories/themes derived from the data? - Were decision trail developed & rules reported? - Have steps been taken to test the credibility of the findings [triangulation, member checking]? - Are you confident that all data were taken into account? - Can you follow what the authors did? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the data analysis appropriate for the study design, question and type of data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statistical tests identified? - Alpha level identified? - Sufficient rigor? • Do the results and findings relate the data to the purpose of the study and its hypothesis or research question? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do results match methods? - Are findings statistical significant? - Are tables and figures appropriate and clear? - Hypothesis accepted or rejected? - Are alternative explanations provided? - Are results clinically important? - Are limitations discussed?
<p>What are the findings and conclusions? Do the findings and conclusions relate the data to the purpose?</p>	
Qualitative	Quantitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a clear statement of the findings? • Is there a sense of personally experiencing the event or phenomenon being studied? • What were the main limitations of the study? • Were the conclusions appropriate given the study findings? • Do the findings contribute to theory development and future practice/ research? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were the conclusions appropriate given the study findings? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Were conclusions based on results? - Do the findings contribute to theory development and future practice/research? - Are there recommendations for additional study?
<p>Are the findings of this study applicable to my practice?</p>	
Qualitative	Quantitative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this study help me to understand the context of my practice? • Does this study help me understand my relationships with my patients and their families, community, or health care system? • Are the findings transferable to my practice? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the findings applicable to my patient/client? • Are the findings generalizable to the population?