

Basic research steps





Before you begin

- What is the purpose of your research?
- Transparency in every aspect;
- It is OK not to know – much better in fact;
- Take a questioning approach;
- Do it properly, you are producing evidence.





What does epistemology mean?

- Epistemology is a way of knowing- research is an epistemology and within this there is:
 - Naturalistic enquiry -
 - Experimental type research
 - Indigenous ways of knowing
 - Use different thinking processes, have different philosophies, ways of going about knowing



First steps

Finding out what is already known

- Literature search
- What concepts or theory
- Networking with colleagues
- Asking the experts



What is theory?

- A set of interrelated constructs, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying the relationships among variables with the purpose of explaining or predicting phenomena (Kerlinger 1973)



Why use theory?

A structural map to help us understand multiple realities

- Abstraction is the symbolic representation of shared experience
- First level- concepts are directly sensed
- Second level - constructs does not have a referent in shared experience
- Third level - propositions govern sets of relationships
- Fourth level is theory – sets of propositions



Experimental and naturalistic research

- Experimental-type research moves from greater levels of abstraction to lesser levels
- Naturalistic-type research moves from lesser levels of abstraction to greater levels of abstraction



Getting the question right – a most important step

- Asking a clear question;
- Focused;
- Manageable within your resources and timeframe;
- One that is able to be answered;



Examples

- What types of community participation occur in rural communities in health related activities?
- What are the risk factors for Metabolic Syndrome in Indigenous communities?
- What factors create barriers to men's health service utilisation in regional communities?



Finding out how to answer the question

- What information do you need?
- How will you get that information?
- Seek advice about methods if you are a beginning researcher
- Run with your strengths when choosing a method
- Do I need ethics approval?



Summarising the information

- Let the information speak for itself,
- Explain why you think you found out what you did,
- Explain what is new or different about your information,
- Make sure that you answered the questions you started with, if not why not?



Getting the information out and about

- Back to the aims and objectives, who do you need to inform?
- Quickly share the knowledge while people are interested,
- Publish a report of your research in a journal,
- Do a talk on the radio,
- Could your research influence policy?



References

- DePoy, E. & Gitlin, L. 1994, Introduction to Research, Mosby, St Louis
- Kerlinger, F. 1973, Foundations of Behavioural Research, Holt Reinhart, Winston, NY