Letters to the Editor

Teen magazines

It's great to see such a wonderful feature in this issue of the Journal (pp. 132–135). Under the heading "Teen magazines"...

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References

1 Cerazette® licence extension

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I was glad to see your journal publish a series on qualitative research, and commend the authors for their concise summary of qualitative methodology in family planning and reproductive health care.

I wish to make a few additional points, particularly with respect to the range of qualitative research methods. Qualitative research generates data with no inherent numeric value (images, sounds, words, etc.) and typically takes the form of text. Most definitions of qualitative research, however, do not distinguish between the data themselves and the analyses performed on them. The authors of your series discuss some of the more frequently used qualitative data collection strategies: in-depth interviews and focus groups – as well as some of the more common qualitative approaches to data analysis. Like many others in the field, however, they miss an ever-growing suite of quantitatively-oriented analytical methods that can be employed with qualitative data.

Qualitative data are often, indeed, quantified. Text or themes can be numerically coded and put into matrices, for example, and portrayed in health science journals. I encourage interested readers to have a look at some of the reviews for innovation in this field, such as Field Methods Journal or the Cochrane Qualitative Methods Network (http://www.isisp.salford.ac.uk/cochrane/homepage.htm).

Greg Guest, PhD
Senior Research Associate, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Family Health International, PO Box 13950, Research Triangle Park, NC 27709, USA

References


Reply

We are glad to read that Dr Guest has valued our series of articles on qualitative methods in family planning and reproductive health and agree that it is an expanding and exciting field. We do appreciate, of course, that our articles are meant to be (a) aimed at a broad audience and (b) merely an introduction to qualitative methods. This said, we have outlined one of these quantitative approaches in the qualitative methods paper appearing in this issue of the Journal (pp. 132–135). Under the heading

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