

Quality appraisal of studies

Qualitative studies	[61]	[60]	[72]	[73]	[70]	[57]	[17]	[79]	[69]	[63]	[64]	[65]	[67]	[66]
Philosophy congruent with methodology	U	U	U	U	+	U	+	U	+	U	U	-	-	U
Methodology congruent with aim	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	U	+	+	+	+	+	+
Methodology congruent with data collection methods	U	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Methodology congruent with analysis	-	+	+	U	+	+	+	U	+	+	+	+	U	+
Methodology congruent with interpretation of results	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	U	+	+	-	+	+	+
Researcher background stated	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Influence of researcher stated	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	U	-	-	-	-
Participant voices adequately represented	U	+	+	+	+	U	+	U	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ethical approval	U	+	+	+	+	+	+	U	+	+	+	-	-	U
Conclusions derived from data	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Survey studies	[14]	[77]	*	[76]	[13]	[68]	[75]	[71]	[74]	[62]	[81]	[80]	[78]	
Clear aim addressed	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Design appropriate for research question	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Clear selection process	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
Potential for selection bias	+	-	+	+	-	U	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	
Subjects are representative	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	
Power analysis included	-	-	NA	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	
Response rate in % (satisfactory if $\geq 60\%$)**	68.8	42	46.2	33	96.5	61.4	61.4	17.3	65	81%	46.3	53	23.3	
Valid and reliable measurements	+	+	U	U	U	U	U	U	+	+	U	+	+	
Statistical significance assessed	+	+	NA	+	+	NA	+	+	+	U	NA	+	+	
Confidence intervals given	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-	
Unaccounted confounding factors present	+	+	U	+	+	NA	-	+	+	+	NA	-	-	
Mixed-methods studies	[58]	[19]												
Qualitative objective present	+	+												
Design/methods appropriate for research question	+	+												
Context described	+	+												
Participants described & sample justified	-	+												
Qual data collection & analysis described	+	+												
Researcher's reflexivity described	-	-												
Quant sampling & sample appropriate	-	-												
Justification of measurements (validity)	+	+												
Confounding variables controlled	-	-												
Mixed-methods design justified by authors	-	1												
Combination of qual & quant data collection & analysis	+	+												
Integration qual & quant results	+	-												
Descriptive cross-sectional study	[59]													
Clear aim addressed	+													
Methods appropriate for research question	+													
Sample representative	-													
Measurements accurate and valid	U													
Data collection method appropriate	+													
Participant number large enough	U													
Results correct presented	+													
Analysis correct	-													
Findings clearly stated	+													

+ = yes; - = no; U = unclear; NA = Criterion not applicable because of descriptive design;

* Bergeson J, Cash R, Boulger J, Bergeron D: The attitudes of rural Minnesota family physicians toward nurse practitioners and physician assistants. J Rural Health 1997, 13(3):196-205.

** 60% was chosen based on recommendations in the literature