

Contributions of qualitative research to understanding strategic themes in public health

Qualitative research is essential to understand public health strategic themes, exploring social, cultural, and behavioral aspects influencing people's care and well-being¹. This editorial highlights themes from researchers from different institutions during the Ibero-American Congress on Qualitative Research in 2024. The studies address issues such as palliative and elderly care, violence against women, the use of technologies in health actions, and health surveillance.

In the population aging context, integration between Long-Term Care Facilities and Primary Health Care is seen as an effective strategy to improve care. Intergenerational relationships also promote knowledge exchange between young people and older adults, strengthening family and social bonds. In palliative care, the difficulties faced by family caregivers, often overwhelmed by the lack of formal support, are evident. Public policies and training programs are suggested as ways to strengthen support networks. At the same time, research using technologies such as Portal *Estimule* and artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT reveal the potential to transform health practices. However, a study² points to the need to adapt these tools to local realities, considering access barriers and ethical and cultural challenges.

Another central aspect highlighted is building knowledge in health. Research on the experiences of mothers with premature babies in neonatal ICUs or health students' perceptions about clinical practices highlights how real experiences influence learning and care practices. Furthermore, participatory methods, such as dialogue circles and educational activities, are valued for promoting collective reflections and comprehensive care, enabling a richer understanding of community needs³.

On the other hand, a review study that highlights the fragility of health surveillance during the COVID-19 pandemic in Brazil and a scoping review on violence against women reveal gaps in institutional responses. The first study highlights several distorted measures that contradict science in the face of pandemic chaos, and the second highlights the importance of inclusive approaches sensitive to the gender and social class context.

Finally, we underscore that some studies incorporate technologies such as software into the qualitative analysis process. These tools are powerful, as they enhance the exploration and understanding of multiple aspects of the topics addressed. These studies reaffirm their relevance in formulating innovative and contextualized responses to public health challenges.

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