

Epi 240

# Qualitative Approaches in Clinical and Translational Research

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Session 7

Using Computer Software for Qualitative Data Analysis

Feb 16, 2010

Daniel Dohan, PhD

Philip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies, UCSF

# What's up today

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- Prep for assignment 3
- Intro to CAQDA analysis
  - What it does and doesn't do
  - How different packages compare
- Two software packages in action

# Coding and memoing in prep for assignment 3

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- Experiment with what kind of coding works for you & your project
  - Grounded theory (bottom-up)
  - Hypothesis or problem-driven (top down)
  - Freeform
- Memo'ing
  - Stimulate new creativity, self-reflection & material
  - productivity = (low stakes)\*(small audience)\*(manageable goal)
  - Cluster writing and free writing
  - Mindmapping and other software tricks

# CAQDA Software

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- Can...
  - Reduce recall bias
  - Co-ordinate multiple researchers
  - Reduce mechanical work (?)
- Can not...
  - Transform qualitative analysis into quantitative analysis
  - Create variables
  - Produce results

# MS Word/Excel (hand code + spreadsheet)

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- Advantages
  - Data entry
  - Portability
- Disadvantages
  - Organizing
  - Searching
  - Coding

Bottom line: for smaller projects, especially deductive projects, these simple tools, combined with hand coding, can avoid the danger of over-engineering and over-thinking.

# Hand coding + spreadsheet: Example

|  | Realizations/Insights   | Interviewee Opinion | Initiative/Action  | Education | Service | Advice Given/Mentorship  | Policy/Grant Writing |
|--|---|---------------------|--|-----------|---------|--|----------------------|
| On Dvlpmt of Interest in Health Policy | Had discussion with aunt and cousins about healthcare, African-Americans, and access to healthcare issues (costs, care would receive, not wanting to be judged at clinics, concerns about going to places where people may know them, etc.) |                     | Called high govt official office to ask for job. Sent a letter inquiring about a job. Didn't end up developing into anything, but demonstrates initiative. |           |         | Senior scientist at lab where working suggested she go into politics; so, started "campaign" to get her to start working in govt official office @ HHS |                      |
|  | Clinton administration (political climate charged, especially around healthcare)  |                     | Applied to medical that year.  |           |         |  |                      |
|  | Interest in disparities and minority health, particularly cancer (unsure where interest in cancer came from)  |                     |  |           |         |  |                      |
|  | 1992--after undergrad; moved to D.C. (for change of scenery; not for political reasons)   |                     |  |           |         |  |                      |
|  | Conversations with family had strong impact on what she wrote in app to govt official & med school interviews/apps  |                     |  |           |         |  |                      |
|  | 2nd year of medical school, aunt had stage IV BC & died. Fueled choice of project, as well as work with local groups  |                     |  |           |         |  |                      |

# Folio Views

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- Advantages
  - Interface (YMMV)
  - Data management, organizing
  - Searching
  - Facilitate hypothesis-driven/top-down coding
- Disadvantages
  - Orphan software not meant for CAQDA
  - Roll-your-own solution requires investment
  - Work-arounds needed for coding, memoing, multiple researchers

Bottom line: This package retains the “look and feel” of paper coding but because it is not designed for qualitative analysis some workarounds are needed and it is not well suited to GT or other inductive approaches.

# Atlas-ti & Nvivo

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- Advantages

- Facilitate grounded/bottom-up coding and memoing
- Searching/analyzing codes
- Co-ordinate multiple investigators

- Disadvantages

- Interface (YMMV)
- Data organization
- Code proliferation

Bottom line: This software is designed for GT analysis. If that is your approach or if you expect to spend a lot of analytical time tuning your codebook, these packages can be helpful.