



Guidelines for writing up key informant interviews as a scholarly article

Purpose

Key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people—including community leaders, professionals, or others who have first-hand knowledge about the community. These community experts, with their knowledge and understanding, can provide insight on the nature of problems and give recommendations for solutions. These interviews need to have high information power (Malterud et al., 2016); that is, interviewers need to elicit rich data from key informants that clearly addresses a specific issue.

When to conduct key informant interviews

- To obtain information about a pressing issue in the community from a limited number of well-connected and informed community experts.
- To understand the motivation and beliefs of community residents on a particular issue.
- To obtain information from people with diverse backgrounds and opinions and be able to ask in-depth and probing questions.
- To discuss sensitive topics, get respondents' candid discussion of the topic, or to get the depth of information you need. Individual or small group discussions (two to three people maximum) create a comfortable environment where individuals can have a frank and open in-depth discussion.

Ethics and key informants

Key informants are identified as subject/context experts and are acknowledged and named. Ideally, they should be included as co-authors. In this context, ethics approval is not required.

The interview

Interviews are typically loosely structured with individuals or groups and may resemble a conversation between acquaintances.

How to write up a key informant interview for publication

- Provide a brief background and context for the conversation.
- Provide the overarching aim/question guiding the conversation.
- Introduce the key informants, ensuring adequate information is given to establish how they are positioned to provide key information, including credentials if relevant.
- The data maybe written as a dialogue or conversation; or in the more traditional format where qualitative data is presented, in which case substantial direct quotes are required. The interviewer may want to consider organising qualitative data into major categories. This process means that the conversation may be re-organised for publication to increase readability while remaining true to the intended meanings of the key informants. These categories are shaped by the interview questions that were asked.
- Consider using tables to clearly present key information.

Implications/recommendations

The document typically ends with brief implications and recommendations, for example, for policy and practice.

What to look for in key informant interviews:

- Identify major views.
- Report important insights.
- If there is no clear pattern, and/or divergent views, report this point.
- Report changes and solutions informants recommend.
- Triangulate information with other data sources (evidence and literature).

This guide was developed using the following resources:

Lokot, M. (2021). Whose voices? whose knowledge? A feminist analysis of the value of key informant interviews. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, 1–8.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920948775>

Malterud, K., Siersma, V., & Guassora, A. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1753–1760.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315617444>

UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. (n.d.) *Section 4: Key informant interviews*. Author.

https://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/programs/health-data/trainings/Documents/tw_cba23.pdf

UNICEF. (n.d.) *Communication for immunization: Key informant interview*. Author.

https://s3.amazonaws.com/gpei-tk/reference_links/en/Key_Informant_Interview_Tips.pdf