

## Introducing A Virtual Issue on Qualitative Methods

We are pleased to introduce a new product from *Research in Nursing & Health*: the first virtual compendium of the top 14 articles and editorials on qualitative methods downloaded from Wiley InterScience between January and September of 2008. We hope practitioners, faculty, and students of qualitative research will find this virtual package accessible and useful.

Several of these papers have had a relatively long citation shelf-life; they were originally published up to 11 years ago. Three of them are from 1997 (Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden on qualitative metasynthesis; Thorne, Kirkham, & MacDonald-Emes on interpretive description); one each was published in 1998 (Sandelowski on writing up qualitative research reports) and in 1999 (Docherty & Sandelowski on interviewing children); and the two most downloaded articles were originally published in 2000 (Sandelowski papers on qualitative description and mixed methods research).

Although they cover a range of topics, 10 of these 14 papers show the growing concern over the last two decades with enhancing the utilization value of qualitative research. The authors addressed the synthesis and application of qualitative research findings (Kearney, 2001; Sandelowski, Docherty, & Emden, 1997); the contributions of qualitative research to translational research and randomized clinical trials (Chesla, 2008; Schumacher, 2005), the combination of qualitative and quantitative data (Sandelowski, 2000; Sandelowski, Barroso, & Voils, 2007), and the dissemination of qualitative findings (Sandelowski, 1998, 2001, 2007, 2008). The authors of these papers clarified the actionability of qualitative methods and the findings generated from them.

The remaining four papers show unity in diversity. Although apparently addressing the same methodologic topic—qualitative description—Sandelowski (2000) and Thorne et al. (1997)

offered different understandings of descriptive studies. Thorne et al. presented a discipline-specific rendering of a methodological approach to qualitative research they created; Sandelowski presented a description of a generic qualitative method often used in health sciences research. The final two papers addressed interviewing, which is still the primary data collection technique in qualitative research, its target (children; Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999) and its modality (telephone; Novick, 2008).

The editors of *Research in Nursing & Health* are proud to be able to bring this compendium of excellent qualitative methods papers to you in this convenient format. We hope you enjoy it and find it useful.

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