

Thematic Review enhanced approaches



More dynamic, more insightful, less costly routes to getting big answers...

There are increasing calls for the NHS to use more thematic review analytical approaches in understanding issues such as patient safety, clinical outcomes and patient feedback. The new Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) encourages organisations to undertake thematic review using inductive or deductive approaches: the SEIPS (Systems Engineering Initiative for Patient Safety). Whilst PSIRF offers some guidance on the desired outcomes from thematic review, there is little in the way of an actual formula or process for organisations to follow.

Thematic review (or thematic analysis) is, strictly speaking, a scientific discipline which requires certain conditions to be in place to enable accurate (and useful) end-user insights. In a similar vein to evaluative techniques, the approaches to quantitative and qualitative data in thematic review are important to combine without introducing:



- Bias and persuasion, such as relying on a pre-agreed set of “themes” uninformed by the actual data
- Inaccurate, unvalidated or unreliable source data, such as poor quality care records
- Gaps where useful information is excluded or not considered
- Loose or tenuous connections between evidence and outcomes

“In thematic review it is just as important to understand the things which went well and delivered a positive outcome as well as the things which didn’t go well. Assessing the incidence of the correct application of a process helps to reinforce the understanding of the gap, yet we rarely focus upon good outcomes...”

James Fitton

Starting your thematic review journey...

When designing any thematic review process you should:

- **Develop a thematic review standard operating process as part of your Patient Safety Plan**
- **Be clear whether the review you are doing needs ethics approval, the application of duty of candour or patient/family involvement**
- **Use researchers (internal or external) who are not conflicted and have little or no investment in the result, just that the method used is sound and free from bias.**



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About the Niche mixed method approaches...

Niche offers several different packages to support organisations in thematic review. Our methods have been developed over many years by: undertaking some of the largest evaluations in the country; as well as undertaking several hundred serious and high-profile healthcare related investigations. All of this is combined with sophisticated analytical techniques which provide fast and cost-effective ways of rapidly summarising large volumes of documents and text, lending themselves to both the inductive (where there is no prior theory or hypothesis as to the themes) and deductive (trying to validate or prove an existing theory) approaches. Our support packages include:

Options (separately or combined)



1

Patient Safety Planning

We support the development of your bespoke thematic review processes by mapping your current processes and capacity.



2

Handing the baton to us...

You know where a theme is emerging and you simply require our support in providing a full understanding of the issues at hand.



3

The open book approach...

We do a full 'wash' on your data and information and develop the key themes for you, from evidence, to inform your plan.



4

A wholesale approach

We take your concerns, add in other emerging themes, evaluate areas of good practice and develop your Patient Safety Plan.

Deliverable

Development of a new (co-produced) standard operating procedure to enable you to develop forward approaches.

We produce a report which validates and assesses your themes or concerns and we independently deep-dive those issues.

A detailed report which highlights and prioritises key patient safety themes providing you with a comprehensive action plan.

A detailed report and fieldwork including workshops with staff in all areas culminating in the production of a Plan.

Building an effective thematic review

The iterative process of building a thematic review. Start with the end in sight and stay vigilant to subtleties:

Scope/Method statement

What do you want to review?
What isn't working?
What keeps happening?

Establish the questions you want to ask of the data
Define sources

Gather Sources

Brainstorm possible data
Define and deliver interviews/surveys
Find what works well
Understand counterfactuals
Search for meaning
Define codes and assign

Organise

Name the themes
Analyse codes and links between codes
Analyse confounders
Build meaning together
Arrange into findings

Develop

Safety plan
Strategy
Risk register
Business case
Pathway
Audit
Improvement



James Fitton - Partner

Has an MSc in evidence-based practice from University of Oxford, and has led many evaluations and thematic reviews over the past 25 years, including complex multi-site projects.



Mary-Ann Bruce- Partner

Mary-Ann has led on large scale reviews and continues to develop methods to analyse patient safety data in a reliable format. Mary-Ann works closely with James on investigative and thematic review methods, ensuring that families and stakeholders are core to the process.