

Information Sheet for Participants

eMERGe - Developing Meta-Ethnography Reporting Guideline and standards for research

We are inviting you to take part in this study because you have an interest in or expertise in the use of qualitative evidence to inform practice and policy for health and social care, social work or education; or you are a member of the public or a patient with an interest in the use of qualitative evidence to improve health care; or you are an academic expert in meta-ethnography, qualitative synthesis and/or qualitative research.

Please read this information sheet before deciding to take part – it explains why the research is being done and what taking part would involve for you. Please also ask questions if anything you read is not clear or you would like more information.

What is this study about?

This study will develop a guideline to improve the reporting quality of meta-ethnographies. Meta-ethnography is a systematic way to bring together evidence on a specific topic from many existing qualitative studies, such as those using patient interviews. The NHS needs high quality research evidence to inform services it offers to patients. In a meta-ethnography researchers re-interpret qualitative studies to come up with new conclusions on a specific topic. A meta-ethnography can explain, for example, how and why health services or policies work or not, why patients or health professionals behave in a certain way, or what it is like to experience an illness.

Findings from high quality meta-ethnographies have been used in clinical guidelines. However, published meta-ethnographies vary in the quality of reporting, which means it is sometimes difficult to trust in the evidence they provide. There are no specific guidelines on how to report a meta-ethnography. Therefore we aim to develop such a guideline and standards - to do this, we wish to involve a range of individuals with different views and experiences.

What is involved in taking part?

Your participation in the study is voluntary and you can withdraw at any point. Taking part will involve completing three online questionnaires, over a period of 12 weeks, beginning at the start of August 2016.

The questionnaires are a way to get agreement from all the study participants on what will go into the guideline. We are using a method of reaching agreement called 'the Delphi technique.' Every 4 weeks for 3 months, we will send you an email asking you to go to a website to answer a questionnaire. Each of the three questionnaires will take approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete. For each questionnaire, you can save your answers and complete it later. In each questionnaire you will be asked to vote on how strongly you think each item from a list of items should be included in the guideline. In questionnaires 2 and 3 you can see how many participants voted for each item and have a chance to change your answers from the first questionnaire. There will be no face-to-face communication. To take part you will need access to the internet on a computer or tablet. We will provide you with support and training to take part if you need any.

The study has been approved by the School of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Stirling.

Will I get paid to take part?

If you are taking part as a lay person (e.g. a patient or member of the public) you will be paid for your participation in line with good practice (www.invo.org.uk). You will receive £90 for completing three questionnaires (£30 for each questionnaire). If you need support or training to take part in the study, we will also pay you for up to half a day of your time (up to £75). People taking part in an academic or professional capacity will **not** be paid for taking part.

Confidentiality, anonymity and what will you do with the data I provide?

Your personal information (e.g. name, email address) will be stored securely and destroyed in accordance with the Data Protection Act. We will use the data you provide in the questionnaires to develop the reporting guideline. We will produce a report from the results of the questionnaires, and the final reporting guideline, which we will send you by email or post.

How confidential are my answers to the questionnaires?

All your responses to the questionnaire will be anonymous to the other participants. The data will be stored on a password-protected database on a secure computer server at the University of Stirling. The research team can see how many answers you have made, but not what those answers are. Your name and email address are stored in the database but they are not linked to your questionnaire responses.

Are there risks and possible benefits in taking part?

Your participation will help design standards and reporting guideline for meta-ethnographies to increase the likelihood that their findings are used to improve health care services, decisions, and patient care in the future. It is unlikely that taking part in the study will cause you any harm or emotional distress, but it is possible that you may get upset if the study causes you to reflect on your own experience of any health issues that affect you or people close to you. We can provide you with a list of potential sources of support if you would like one. You can also take a break from or stop taking part whenever you want.

Who is funding the study?

This study is funded by the National Institute for Health Research Health Services and Delivery Research Programme (grant number 13/114/60).

Who do I contact if I want more information or wish to take part?

For more information about the study, if you have any questions, or if you wish to take part please contact either: the principal investigator Dr **Emma France** (Tel: **01786 466421**, email: emma.france@stir.ac.uk) or either of the researchers who are managing the project **Isabelle Uny** (Tel: **01786 466287**, isabelle.uny@stir.ac.uk) or **Rachel Roberts** (Tel: 01597 860735, rachel.roberts@stir.ac.uk) . If you want to talk to an independent person about the study who is NOT part of the research team or to make a complaint, then please contact the Head of the School of Health Sciences, Professor **Jayne Donaldson** on 01786 466345, email jayne.donaldson@stir.ac.uk

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and for considering taking part in this study.