

## **Chapter 2**

### **Research design and methodology**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved the methodology followed to examine the problem and in phase 2 the guidelines were developed for public health workers to support newly initiated Xhosa men undergoing circumcision in East London in the Eastern Cape Province.

#### **2.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

##### **2.1.1 Phase 1**

The objective of phase 1 was to explore and describe the experience of newly initiated Xhosa men undergoing circumcision rites at East London in the Eastern Cape Province (see chapter 3).

##### **2.2.2 Phase 2**

The purpose of phase 2 was to develop and describe guidelines for public health professionals to support newly initiated Xhosa men undergoing circumcision rites in East London in the Eastern Cape Province (see chapter 4).

#### **2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Polit and Hungler (1991:653) define a research design as “the overall plan for collecting and analysing data including specifications for enhancing the internal and external validity of the study”. The researcher used a qualitative, explorative, descriptive and contextual design to gain an insight into the experience of newly initiated Xhosa men undergoing indigenous circumcision rites in East London in the Eastern Cape Province.

### **2.3.1 Qualitative**

Burns and Grove (2001:237) describe qualitative research as “a systematic, interactive subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning”.

### **2.3.2 Exploratory**

According to Brink (2000:11), an exploratory research design is used “to explore the dimensions of a phenomenon, the manner in which it is manifested and the other factors with which it is related. It provides more insight about the nature of a phenomenon.” Polit and Hungler (1991:19) point out that the investigator may desire a richer understanding of the phenomenon of interest than a straightforward descriptive study could provide and add that the reason is salient when a new area or topic is investigated. Therefore the researcher selected an exploratory design for the study.

### **2.3.3 Descriptive**

The purpose of descriptive design is “to emphasise the description of a specific individual, situation, group interaction or social objects. The principle is to present an accurate description of what is being studied” (Strauss & Corbin 1990:22). The researcher used a descriptive design to describe the respondents’ experience and the guidelines developed to support newly initiated Xhosa men who undergo circumcision and promote their mental health.

### **2.3.4 Contextual**

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990:101), a context represents a specific set of properties that pertain to a phenomenon and contextual studies tend to be descriptive and exploratory. The findings of this study are presented in the context of the population studied, namely newly initiated Xhosa men in East London in the Eastern Cape Province.

## **2.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The researcher conducted the study in two phases in order to explore the respondents' experience (phase 1) and to develop and describe guidelines for public health workers to support newly initiated Xhosa men who undergo indigenous traditional circumcision rites and promote their mental health (phase 2).

### **2.4.1 Phase 1: Exploration of the experience of newly initiated Xhosa men of undergoing circumcision rites in East London in the Eastern Cape Province**

Exploring and gaining insight into the experience of newly initiated Xhosa men undergoing indigenous circumcision rites in East London in the Eastern Cape Province involved ethical considerations, targeting the population and sample, determining inclusion criteria and selecting the data-collection instruments.

#### **2.4.1.1 Ethical considerations**

According to Brink (2000:38), ethical considerations mean that the nurse researcher must carry out the research competently, manage resources honestly, acknowledge fairly those who contributed guidance or assistance, communicate results accurately, and consider the consequences of the research for society. In this study, the researcher obtained permission from the Eastern Cape Provincial Health Department and selected hospital authorities to conduct the study and from the participants. The researcher obtained the participants' informed consent to voluntarily participate in the study (see appendix 3 for consent form). The researcher explained the purpose and significance of the study to the participants and assured them that their right to (1) fair treatment, (2) anonymity and confidentiality, (3) protection from discomfort and harm and (4) privacy would be respected.

#### **2.4.1.2 Population and sampling**

Polit and Hungler (1991:254) define a population as "the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria". The researcher considered all newly initiated Xhosa men who underwent traditional circumcision in East London in the Eastern Cape Province as eligible for inclusion in the study.

### **2.4.1.3 Inclusion criteria**

According to Polit and Hungler (1991:254), it is important when identifying a population to be specific about the criteria for inclusion in the population. For this study, the participants had to

- be Xhosa-speaking newly initiated Xhosa men so that they belonged to one ethnic group
- recently have undergone indigenous circumcision rites
- reside in East London in the Eastern Cape Province
- be between 15 and 20 years old, as that is the most popular age for Xhosa-speaking boys to be circumcised to become men
- give their voluntary consent to participate

### **2.4.1.4 Sampling**

Polit and Hungler (1991:254) refer to sampling as “the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population”. In this study the researcher used purposive or non-probability sampling. This involved non-random sampling of subjects. The number of participants interviewed was determined by data saturation as reflected in repeating themes (Morse 1995:149).

## **2.5 DATA COLLECTION**

The researcher used in-depth semi-structured focus group interviews and field notes for data collection.

### **2.5.1 In-depth semi-structured focus group interviews**

To allow the participants, who had undergone indigenous traditional circumcision, to express their experience directly without the constraints of rigid, predetermined questions, the researcher conducted in-depth semi-structured focus group interviews. The interviewer used an interview schedule or list of areas to be covered. The researcher’s function was to encourage the participants to talk freely about the topic and

to record the responses on a tape recorder (Polit & Hungler 1991:279). The participants were all asked the following research question:

What is your experience of undergoing indigenous circumcision?

In order to obtain the maximum information from the participants, the researcher employed facilitative communication skills to facilitate the discussion during the interviews.

## **2.6 FACILITATIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

The researcher made use of the following facilitative communication skills in the focus group interviews to help explore the participants' experience of undergoing indigenous circumcision rites: probing, reflecting, clarifying, paraphrasing and summarising (Wilson & Kneisl 1988:232; Uys & Middleton 2004:154).

### **2.6.1 Probing**

According to Uys and Middleton (2004:154), probing is used to explore problems and to disclose information about a person in the empathic atmosphere of a therapeutic relationship, it is necessary to understand the problem better. The researcher used probing to elicit more information from the participants, with phrases like: "tell me more"; "I wonder, let's talk about it ...".

### **2.6.2 Reflecting**

Besides probing, the researcher also used reflecting. Reflecting involves two dimensions, namely reflecting content and feelings.

#### **2.6.2.1 *Reflecting content***

According to Wilson and Kneisl (1988:231), reflecting content is "repeating the client's verbal or non-verbal message for the client's benefit. In reflecting the content of the message, the interviewer basically repeats clients' statements. This gives clients the

opportunity to hear and think over what they said.” In this study reflecting was used to help the participants reflect on the experiences they shared with the researcher.

### **2.6.2.2 Reflecting feeling**

Reflecting feeling means verbalising what participants imply. The researcher reflected the feelings portrayed by the participants during the focus group interviews in order to understand the underlying content and indirect expression of thoughts. Verbalising the implied helped the researcher provide an objective picture of the situation.

### **2.6.3 Clarifying**

Clarifying is an attempt to understand the basis of the nature of clients’ statements. Clarification is necessary when a participant’s communication is not to the point. For clarification, the researcher used statements or questions such as “I’m confused about ...”; “you are feeling anxious now, what’s that like for you?”

### **2.6.4 Paraphrasing**

In paraphrasing, researchers assimilate and restate what they heard the clients say. Paraphrasing tests a researcher’s understanding of what participants are trying to communicate.

### **2.6.5 Summarising**

In summarising, the researcher synthesises what has been communicated in an interview and highlights the major affective and cognitive themes. This response is important at the end of a session for both researcher and participant because it helps the participant recall areas discussed.

## 2.7 INTERVIEWS

The interviews were conducted in a quiet place and the participants made comfortable for the duration of the interview session. A tape-recorder was used to capture the dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee. All the interviewees were asked:

What was your experience of undergoing indigenous circumcision?

## 2.8 FIELD NOTES

The researcher made observational, theoretical and personal field notes as validation of observation and taped comments during data collection or interview sessions. Observational notes described events experienced through watching and listening; in other words, the “who”, “what” and “how” of the situation. Theoretical notes were used to derive meaning from the observational notes. Personal notes contained the researcher’s reactions and experiences.

## 2.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Brink (2000:178) refers to data analysis as describing the data in meaningful terms. Data analysis requires researchers to be comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons. Researchers must be open to the possibility of seeing contradictory or alternative explanations. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed according to Creswell’s (1994:155) eight-step descriptive method as follows:

- (1) *Get a sense of the whole.* The researcher will read all transcriptions carefully and perhaps dot down some ideas as they come to mind.
- (2) *Pick an interview.* The researcher will then select the shortest, most interesting interview and go through it asking, what this about? The researcher will think about the underlying meaning and write down any thoughts in the margin.
- (3) *Make a list of topics.* When this task has been completed for several informants, the researcher will make a list of all topics, and form these topics into columns that can be arranged as major topics.
- (4) *Code.* The researcher will take the list and go back to the data then abbreviate the topics and codes and write codes next to the appropriate segment of the

text.

- (5) *Categorise*. The researcher will find the most descriptive wording and convert them into categories, and reduce the total list of categories by grouping related topics together.
- (6) *Arrange abbreviations alphabetically*. Researcher will make a final decision on the abbreviation for each category and sort these codes alphabetically.
- (7) *Analyse*. Will assemble data material belonging to each category in one place and perform preliminary analysis.
- (8) *Record*. When necessary, the researcher will record the existing data.

## **2.10 LITERATURE REVIEW**

All themes that will emerge from the results will be discussed in the light of relevant literature and information obtained from similar studies Peens and Poggenpoel (2001:43). The similarities and differences between the research will apply measures for ensuring trustworthiness.

## **2.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher used Guba's model for trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba 1985:235). The model for trustworthiness consists of credibility, triangulation, researcher credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

### **2.11.1 Credibility**

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:235), credibility refers to "confidence in the truth of data" and involves two aspects:

- (1) prolonged engagement
- (2) persistent observation

### **2.11.1.1 Prolonged engagement**

Prolonged engagement is necessary to form rapport and to build trust with the informants (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001:312). The researcher spent considerable time with the participants in interviews and kept field notes on his perceptions.

### **2.11.1.2 Persistent observation**

Persistent observation refers to researchers' focus on aspects of the situation relevant to the phenomenon being studied. During the interviews, the researcher used facilitative communication skills to guide the discussion.

### **2.11.2 Triangulation**

Triangulation is another technique to enhance credibility (Polit et al 2001:313). For this study the researcher used data source triangulation whereby multiple interviews were conducted with different numbers of participants until data became saturated. The researcher also used investigator triangulation for data analysis and interpretation by to check whether the same conclusions were reached.

### **2.11.3 Researcher credibility**

Researcher credibility is the faith that can be put in the researcher. In qualitative studies the researcher is used as a research instrument and analytic process. The researcher's experience is important in establishing confidence in the data (Polit et al 2001:313).

### **2.11.4 Dependability**

This refers to data stability. It involves using the same conditions and same data by independent researchers to replicate the research findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985:235).

### **2.11.5 Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the objectivity of the research data such that two or more independent people would agree about data relevance or meaning (Lincoln & Guba 1985:235). In this study independent qualitative research experts conducted an inquiry audit to confirm the characteristics of the data.

### **2.11.6 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the extent to which findings can be transferred to another setting and generalised (Lincoln & Guba 1985:235).

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter described the research design and methodology, including ethical considerations, population, sampling, data collection and analysis, and trustworthiness.

Chapter 3 discusses the data analysis and findings with reference to the literature reviewed.