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ABSTRACT

Aims. This paper summarises phenomenology and discusses how nurses can use their own experiences as data and maintain rigour within the method. It explores how data from researchers experiencing the phenomenon of interest could be used to explicate assumptions and pre-understandings and may also be used as data.

Background. Whilst the ethnographic concept of insider research has gained popularity, the notion of researcher as participant in phenomenology is relatively new. The lived experience of a phenomenon is unique to each person and utilisation of the nurse researcher's experiences of the phenomenon should be considered for inclusion as data.

Design. Discussion paper

Data sources. Articles from 2001-2015 in the CINAHL and PubMed databases were identified using keywords such as 'insider research', 'phenomenology', 'bracketing' and 'qualitative research'. Additionally, reference lists from articles used were examined to identify additional literature.

Implications for Nursing. Phenomenology is a valuable research method. Usability, credibility, trustworthiness and auditability of data collected must be considered to ensure rigour and maintain orientation to the phenomenon under investigation. Nurse researchers may be interviewed as participants if these four principles are considered and methods used

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are made explicit. Utilising appropriate research methods is as important as getting clinical practice correct to advance knowledge and benefit those under our care.

Conclusion. We recommend using the researchers' experience as a data source to gain a complete picture of the phenomenon under investigation. Using the approach proposed here, nurses can ensure they are incorporating all data sources available while maintaining research rigour.

Keywords

nursing research, qualitative research, phenomenology, heuristic inquiry, hermeneutics, trustworthiness, auditability, lived experience, bracketing, insider research

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Why is this research or review needed?

- Qualitative research is sometimes criticised as being a non scientific method due to the potential for researcher bias. Methods to address potential bias include reflexivity and acknowledgement of researchers' 'insider' status.
- Use of the researchers' own data has not been extensively explored in methodological literature.
- This paper discusses key concepts to consider when utilising the researcher as a participant as a way to ensure quality of the qualitative research process.

What are the key findings?

- A nurse's own experience can be an important data source, can be used as data and may explicate the researchers' assumptions.
- The nurse researcher can be utilised as one of the research participants and the data can be used alongside data from participants, having the same status.
- The major risk to be aware of is that data from the nurse researcher can be used as the organising framework for analysis.

How should the findings be used to influence policy/practice/research/education?

- Usability, credibility, trustworthiness and auditability of data should be used to ensure quality of research.
- The approach we propose could be considered when the experience of the researcher is to be incorporated into the data allowing for completeness of data collection recognising multiple realities.

INTRODUCTION

Phenomenology is the study of meaning, used to understand an experience from the perspective of those who are having it (Cohen 2000). It asks: 'what is the meaning, structure and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people?' (Patton 2015 p.115). Phenomenology and its' use as a research method has been evolving over time. It began as a philosophical approach to understanding human life and living. Moving on from the positions of Husserl and Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer and Ricoeur all published extensively in the philosophical literature (Cohen 2000, Converse 2012, Dowling & Cooney 2012). More recently, van Manen (1990) has explicated an

approach to using phenomenology as a method; he has written extensively on the subject of researching lived experience.

To understand fully a human experience, it is necessary to access it through the subjective lens of the people experiencing it (Karp 1996). The necessity for nurses to understand the experience of others makes phenomenology ideally situated as a research methodology for the nursing profession and there has been a growing acceptance of phenomenology in nursing (Cohen 2000, Le Vasseur 2003). Discussion and debate continues however, regarding the methods utilised by nurses underpinning the approach (Rose *et al.* 1995, Crotty 1996, Le Vasseur 2003, Mackey 2005). Authors often discuss the differences between the work of the philosophers Heidegger and Husserl (Mackey 2005, Converse 2012, Dowling and Cooney 2012, Heinonen 2015a) and debate the focus of phenomenology, whether it is lived experience or phenomena; what constitutes phenomenological data; and, its usefulness as a technique (van Manen 1990, Crotty 1996, Cohen 2000, Paley 2000, Petrovskaya 2014a, Patton 2015). One issue about which the debate is ongoing is the role of the researcher's lived experience and how this should be used and managed within phenomenology.

A criticism of qualitative research methods, not just phenomenology, is that of bias of the researcher (Kahn 2000). While some texts support the notion that preconceptions and presuppositions, or subjective association with the topic under investigation will inevitably bias the interpretation of the data, others argue that there is no such thing as uninterpreted data (van Manen 1990, Crotty 1996, Kahn 2000, Nielsen 2007). While bracketing or suspending their own assumptions and beliefs is a way of allowing researchers to focus solely on the data gathered, some authors query that assumptions can be put aside and believe that researchers' frames of reference always influence the interpretative process (Crotty 1996, Le Vasseur 2003).

Researchers drawing on their own experience of a phenomenon, in particular, is open to criticism of this nature due to the close relationship of the researcher with the research data.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss how data from researchers drawing on their own experience could be used to both explicate assumptions and pre-understandings (van Manen 1990) (sometimes referred to as bracketing) and to access description of lived experience.

While using data in these ways it is necessary to ensure the rigour of the process such that the findings can be accepted as credible and transferable (Sandelowski & Barroso 2007).

The use of a researcher's experience as research data is well accepted and described in other qualitative methods such as anthropology and autoethnography. Another method, heuristic inquiry, is grounded in phenomenology and utilises the personal experience and insights of the researcher in reports (Patton 2015). In this article the appropriateness of and approaches to using the researcher's own experience of a phenomenon in a phenomenological study will be examined. In particular, not only the experience of the researcher as a nurse who has assisted people with first-hand experience of a phenomenon but also the nurse as someone who has personal first-hand lived experience of the phenomenon.

BACKGROUND

In designing a research project researchers must choose the method that is most appropriate to answer the research question whilst also considering which approach will make best use of their own particular knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under consideration to achieve credibility (Rose *et al.* 1995, Dowling and Cooney 2012). Many authors agree that phenomenology is an appropriate interpretative methodological research approach for nurses (Rose *et al.* 1995, Crotty 1996, Todres & Wheeler 2001, Mackey 2005, Converse 2012, Heinonen 2015a). Patricia Benner (who wrote about the development of clinical competence)

and Rosemary Parse (theory of human becoming), are well known nurse phenomenologists (Crotty 1996, Mackey 2005, Polit and Beck 2012). A more recent example of a nurse phenomenologist is Heinonen (2015b) who used van Manen's phenomenological hermeneutic method to describe the lifeworld of multiple birth families in Finland. It is generally agreed that phenomenology is the method of choice when investigating phenomena using lived experience of a phenomenon as data (van Manen 1990, Baker *et al.* 1992, Dowling & Cooney 2012).

It is recognised that nurses engage with patients' lived experiences of health and illness every day (Le Vasseur 2003) and description of human experience is 'foundational to practice' (Todres & Wheeler 2001 p. 2), yet little recognition has been paid to the fact that nurses themselves have their own experiences of health and wellness. By extension of that notion and acknowledgement that 'a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience – is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience' (van Manen 1990 p. 27), it would seem remiss to not utilise the lived experiences of nurse researchers themselves if they have experience of the phenomena under investigation.

This paper will now provide a discussion of how the researcher's own lived experience of a phenomenon could be used to both explicate assumptions and pre-understandings (van Manen 1990) and to access description of lived experience. It will also address the question of what determines quality in qualitative research and, suggest ways that nurses use their own data and maintain the standards of quality.

DATA SOURCES

A literature search using the terms insider research, bracketing, phenomenology and qualitative research was conducted using the CINAHL and PubMed databases. Although 'insider research' is an ethnographical term, these articles discussed the issue of utilising data from the researcher's own experience and therefore were considered appropriate for inclusion. Five hundred and seventy-nine articles written in English from 2001 until 2015 were retrieved and reference lists of articles were also examined to obtain additional material. Methodological articles from peer reviewed journals relevant to nursing research were prioritised and after duplicates were removed and abstracts reviewed, 72 articles were identified as appropriate for further examination.

Further selection criteria included:

- Seminal works and discussion papers on the development of methodological approaches and methods. Ten books were included at this stage.
- Discussion and/or comparison papers related to issues in methods such as rigour and bracketing
- Papers focusing on methodological debates and controversies such as method slurring and what is phenomenology
- Papers describing use of personal experience

Papers were excluded if they described studies not including personal experience and those that described the use of other research methods (except where the method used was compared with phenomenology). Forty-two references met the criteria for review.

DISCUSSION

The place of the researcher's experience in qualitative methods

Qualitative methods address the issue of using personal experience in different ways. For example in ethnography, researchers who have experience with the culture under investigation are often referred to as insider researchers (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2013).

Autoethnography, originating in ethnography, is also known as insider research; written subjectively and combining personal experience and research techniques (Ellis *et al.* 2011, Polit & Beck 2012, Hogan 2013).

There is no term dedicated in phenomenology to describe the researcher using their own experience as data. Heidegger uses the term Dasein as the entity of 'Being' which we label ourselves and the reader is directed to his work for a comprehensive understanding of this concept (Mulhall 1996). Pre-understandings and assumptions can also be described as the researchers' common sense, presuppositions, preconceptions and prejudices (van Manen 1990, Todres & Wheeler 2001). If we do not acknowledge what we already know about a phenomenon, our thoughts may inadvertently affect our reflection. Acknowledging what we already know can be achieved through such means as bracketing, reduction, reflexivity, reflection and use of a reflective diary and the researcher may also wish to be interviewed. Each has merit and the use of one does not preclude simultaneous use of another.

Bracketing, used in descriptive or Husserlian phenomenology to ensure trustworthiness and limit bias, involves being self-aware or freeing oneself of assumptions and making the researchers own perspective explicit and putting this knowledge aside (Rose *et al.* 1995, Polit & Beck 2012, Heinonen 2015a). The bracketing interview, described by Pollio *et al.* (1997) is an attempt to identify preconceptions whereby the researcher undergoes an interview with the research team prior to interviewing study participants.

The concept of bracketing was conceived by Husserl (1931). He describes the natural standpoint as imagining, judging, feeling and intuitively experiencing the world. He believed we had to suspend our thoughts, or natural standpoint stating:

We do not abandon the thesis we have adopted, we make no change in our conviction, which remains in itself what it is so long as we do not introduce new motives of judgement, which we precisely refrain from doing. And yet the thesis undergoes a modification – whilst remaining in itself what it is, we set it out as it were ‘out of action’ we ‘disconnect it’, ‘bracket it’. (Husserl 1931 p. 57)

Thus Husserl included the full human conscious experience when describing bracketing as the suspension of one’s natural assumptions of the world (Le Vasseur 2003). Husserl was criticised as being an idealist by existentialists for his attempts to describe the essence of phenomena and the implication of a priority of essence over existence (Le Vasseur 2003). He introduced the terms reduction and epochè to describe a new way of looking at things, stripped of everything empirical, following the removal of all consciousness (Husserl 1931). Heidegger disagreed with the notion of phenomenological reduction, holding that as consciousness cannot be separated from existence it is impossible to bracket prior conceptions and knowledge (Le Vasseur 2003). However, Husserl though did not advocate a permanent denial of theories and knowledge, only a temporary suspension (Husserl 1931, Le Vasseur 2003).

Relationship between phenomenology and heuristic inquiry

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge Dictionaries Online 2015), heuristics is a way of solving problems by discovering things yourself and learning from your own experiences. Heuristic inquiry has been described as situated in phenomenology (Crotty 1996, Patton 2015) although Douglass and Moustakas (1985) believe there are several points of difference between the two. Importantly for the focus of this paper they suggest that heuristics retains the essence of the person in the experience rather than the essence of the experience which is the endpoint of phenomenological inquiry. Moustakas is credited with being the primary developer of this approach (Patton 2015). While authors such as Langdrige (2007) and Heinonen (2015a) argue that van Manen's method should be seen as heuristic, or at least standing in the same tradition (Crotty 1996), there is a persistent problem in qualitative research of naming and differentiating methods as though there are clear boundaries between them. Methods are always accommodated to the practice of research (Sandelowski 2010). van Manen stated 'In drawing up personal descriptions of lived experiences, the phenomenologist knows that one's own experiences are also the possible experiences of others' (van Manen 1990, p. 54)

Heuristic inquiry requires the researcher to have personal experience with and intense interest in the phenomenon under study, the foundational question being 'what is my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely?' (Patton 2015). Thus an approach to using the researcher's own experience can utilise the essential elements and stages of heuristic inquiry: immersion in the theme, acquisition of data and realisation as described by Douglass and Moustakas (1985). We propose that an approach can be developed that incorporates elements of heuristic inquiry which also includes ways researchers have managed their own experience in phenomenology (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2013). The researcher needs to determine the extent to which their

experience will be used and as Wilkinson and Kitzinger (2013) outline there are several options (Figure 1).

The relationship between the use of personal experience and reflexivity

Reduction as described by van Manen (1990 p. 185) incorporates heuristic ideals and is the returning to the essential structure involving several levels:

1. Awakening of wonder
2. Overcoming one's own expectations
3. Stripping away anything preventing the phenomenon from being seen in a non-abstract manner
4. Seeing past the lived experience toward the universal

Thus the phenomenon is broken down to the essence; the lived meaning seen without prejudice or theories, in its' purest form (van Manen 1990).

Reflexivity is deep introspection, a critical self-exploration and ownership of one's perspective (Patton 2015). This process enables distance from the researchers' own experience so that interpretation of data is not coloured, but allows for later use of that experience to deepen understanding (Todres & Wheeler 2001). Hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology recognises that the researcher has prior understanding and internal suppositions are identified but not bracketed out; rather it is acknowledged that personal knowledge is ever present (Dowling & Cooney 2012, Polit & Beck 2012, Heinonen 2015a). 'As Heidegger himself emphasized, no interpretation of a text can be devoid of preconceptions and value-judgements' (Mulhall 1996 p. xi).

Nurse researchers and the use of personal experience in phenomenology

Todres and Wheeler (2001) believe that hermeneutic issues such as the researcher's presuppositions and prejudices are not always adequately addressed in nursing research. We posit that utilising some elements of heuristic inquiry might be a more appropriate theoretical tradition where to base some nursing research, as it brings the personal experience and insights of the researcher to the forefront.

There is a case for the use of the researchers' lived experience as data in nursing research and we should value our own experiences as much as the experiences of the participants because insiders can offer valuable insights unavailable to outsiders (Vickers 2002, Peterson 2015).

For this reason, we suggest that the researcher's experience can be accessed and used in the following ways. Firstly, it may be used to explicate pre-understanding and assumptions (van Manen, 1990) related to the phenomenon and secondly it can be used as data to be analysed alongside the data from participants (Figure 2). This strategy potentially reduces the power differential, putting the researcher's voice on the same level as the participants (Wilkinson & Kitinger 2013). A third way might be to discover new sources for informing research activities; using personal experiences as suggested by van Manen (1990, p.155). Three examples of nurses utilising their own experience as data are provided in Table 1.

Authors such as Adams (2007) and Ellis et al. (2011) explain the inclusion of the researcher's lived experience as data clearly situates the researcher within the phenomenon of interest.

The inclusion of the researcher as an interview participant fits into a phenomenological approach, as the interview serves to gather rich data to garner a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (van Manen 1990). There are risks to this approach however, for example Yost and Chmielewski (2013) utilised Yost as a research participant in their study which was grounded in feminist values and a constructionist, phenomenological epistemology. As Yost

was interviewed first, her interview was used in the identification of themes and had a greater influence in shaping the interview protocol doubling her contribution to the research (Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2013).

Those who debate the use of the researcher's own experience contend that it allows for the ideas and experiences of the researcher to be included but, if the only voice heard is that of the researcher, the participants do not get a chance to be heard and the plurality of experience existing in any group is not recognised (Guzik 2013, Wilkinson & Kitzinger 2013). Therefore the methodological considerations related to data collection in Figure 3 must be adhered to to produce high quality qualitative research. A key aspect for ensuring plurality is the concept of rigour, which is the means by which competence and integrity are demonstrated (Tobin & Begley 2004).

Rigour in phenomenology

Whilst situating phenomenology within the broader paradigm of interpretive qualitative research it is important to acknowledge the debate about the issues related to rigour in qualitative research. In response to the critique that all qualitative research is subjective, biased and cannot be trusted to advance our knowledge Guba and Lincoln, in the 1980s, introduced criteria to determine trustworthiness (Morse 2015). They suggested various strategies that could be utilised to ensure trustworthiness: dependability, credibility and transferability (Morse 2015). Over the last 35 years there has been great discussion and debate related to these issues and additional concepts such as reliability, accuracy, reducing bias, usability and auditability have been debated (Kahn 2000). Recently, Morse (2015) has suggested a return to the social science terms - rigour, reliability, validity and generalisability

and notes that strategies to ensure trustworthiness or rigour may not be suitable for all qualitative research methods.

Traditionally, phenomenologists have exercised methodological rigour through maintaining orientation to the phenomenon and in the application of the 'hermeneutic circle'. The hermeneutic circle has had a long history and the term has certainly been used in different ways over time (Crotty 1996). The hermeneutic circle is taken in a Heideggerian sense to mean that moving back and forth between the ontic and the ontological facets of the phenomenon that helps to ground and deepen the interpretation. As neither the whole text nor individual part can be understood without the other, it is necessary for both the writer to include these movements and for the reader to enter into a dialogue with the text for a more complete interpretation to occur. van Manen (1997) believes phenomenology engages readers by enriching perspectives through placing the phenomenon in the lifeworld so that the reader can experientially recognise it. By evoking an experience to make it present, a phenomenological text can intensify meaning so that the reader undergoes a transformative experience, reading, reflecting and making meaning through interacting and experiencing epiphanic moments as the text speaks and validates experience (van Manen 1997).

Phenomenology does not produce empirical accounts, it offers instead, an understanding of the human experience to discover the common meanings underlying the given phenomenon; accounts of experience as it is lived (van Manen 1990, Baker *et al.* 1992). The results may only be representative of the sample studied but generalisability as proposed by Johnson (1997), can be explained as vertical and horizontal. Vertical generalisability illuminates existing theory and horizontal generalisability demonstrates that findings are applicable across settings. Thus qualitative research contributes to vertical generalisability in that the research can be directed towards building interpretative theory, provided the researcher has considered the study sample

when considering the aims, strengths and limitations of a study and, if appropriate, the findings may be applied across settings (Johnson 1997).

As phenomenology strives to understand the essence of a phenomenon, within the method rigour is achieved by examining usability, credibility, trustworthiness and auditability (Figure 3). This is especially important when a researcher is also a participant in the study (Baker *et al.* 1992, Converse 2012, Dowling & Cooney 2012). The terms used in Figure 3 were chosen as they reflect language used throughout literature regarding rigour in phenomenology.

Credibility refers to demonstrating truth in the reporting of the research findings. Auditability can be used to demonstrate lack of bias. An audit trail where others can examine the documentation of data and the decision making processes employed in data analysis often relies on reflexivity and accounts of the research process (Tobin & Begley 2004). An emphasis on trustworthiness by taking account of multiple perspectives and by being balanced was suggested by Lincoln and Guba to replace the traditional mandate to be objective (Patton 2015). The use of the term usability is in reference to employment of the chosen method and its' philosophical base.

There are two ways phenomenological research answers the call for methodological rigour.

Firstly, an exploration of the philosophical bases of the method being employed is undertaken.

The dialectical relationship that exists between question and method (van Manen 1990) continues through all phases of the research. The level of ontology of the phenomenon in question has to be explored in conjunction with the ontological fitness of the method employed.

The ways data are collected, experiences are reflected on and interpretations fashioned need to be in congruence with the philosophical underpinnings of the method employed. For the exploration to be undertaken, each researcher has to explore fully, not only the philosophy they choose, but also the aims and possibilities of the research they intend to undertake.

The second way phenomenological research ensures methodological rigour is inherent in the writing of research reports. Strategies demonstrating credibility such as verbatim quotes from participants and audit trails allow readers to interact with the data and audit the authors' interpretation thus to follow the evolution of the interpretation (Tobin & Begley 2004).

Qualitative nurse researchers such as Sandelowski and Barroso (2007) and Koch (1994) have used terms such as 'auditability', 'audit trail' and 'decision trail' to describe the way the reader is given access to the manner in which the researcher has interacted with the research process.

Whether and how this audit trail should include all aspects of the researcher's influence on the method is open to discussion.

IMPLICATIONS FOR NURSING.

Use of the researchers own lived experience in phenomenology

This paper has suggested that data from the experience of a researcher can be used to both explicate assumptions and pre-understandings (van Manen 1990) and to access additional data related to lived experience. The question then arises as to how to access this lived experience and to ensure that methodological rigour is maintained. van Manen (1990, p. 30) identifies six research activities, the first two being 'turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and investigating experience as we live it'. If personal experience is used as a starting point (van Manen 1990), the researcher is already immersed in the theme (Douglass & Moustakas 1985). Access to these data may be possible by the researcher's writing his/her own story, by keeping a reflective journal or by being interviewed. Reflexivity and use of a reflective diary throughout all stages of research has been well documented (Todres & Wheeler 2001, Patton 2015). van Manen (1990, p. 132) states responsive-reflective writing is the very activity of doing phenomenology.

Alongside the continued use of a reflective diary during the research process, we propose that researchers with experience of the phenomenon under investigation also consider being interviewed. Another member of the research team may conduct this interview, using the same interview guide as for other participants. Ideally, this interview will be conducted at an early stage but the data must not be analysed alone. This process will ensure the same voice/weight is given to all participants. Besides providing data for analysis, reflection on the researchers' interview can be a bracketing exercise helping to make assumptions explicit.

Interviews with participants may then proceed followed by an analysis of the data incorporating the activities described by van Manen (1990) such as reflecting, writing and rewriting, considering the parts and the whole. The researcher and the reader can then determine usability, credibility, trustworthiness and auditability of the research findings.

Interviewing of the researcher can be utilised when the experience of the researcher is to be incorporated into the data and allows for completeness of data collection recognising multiple realities (Tobin & Begley 2004). The principle described by Patton (2015) of reporting any personal and professional information that may have affected data collection, analysis and interpretation must be adhered to but the researcher may use a pseudonym in publication to ensure that anonymity of their data is maintained along with that of other participants.

Possible future areas of nursing research using this approach include investigations of lived experience of any phenomenon which affects the nurse researcher. Examples include medical conditions where the researcher has been diagnosed with the condition, working conditions such as investigations into shift workers or aged care nurses undertaken by shift workers or aged care nurses and cultural research where the researcher belongs to the culture under investigation.

It must be remembered that there is no one correct research method, however authors such as Crotty and Paley believe in the importance of the interpretation and application of

phenomenology as a methodology and method (Crotty 1996, Paley 2000, Barkway 2001, Dowling & Cooney 2012, Petrovskaya 2014b). To ensure credibility in nursing research, the take home message for researchers remains that a thorough understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the method employed and aligning data collection strategies to those underpinnings is as important as getting clinical practice correct (Petrovskaya 2014b). It must be acknowledged however, that methods are never perfectly executed as described in textbooks in accordance with the constraints existing in efforts to conduct research (Sandelowski 2010). Participant observation and reflection on participant observation and field experiences while interviewing, which were not the focus of this paper, might, however, also be rich sources of data. There is the expectation that the relevance of the methodology, theoretical framework and methods to the research question are coherent to ensure the premise of transparency, reflexivity and positioning necessary for quality in qualitative research.

CONCLUSION

This paper has described how data from the researcher could be used to both explicate assumptions and pre-understandings (van Manen 1990) and to generate additional data.

Phenomenology is a well-accepted, appropriate research method for exploring phenomena of interest to nurses. Utilising the experience of the researcher makes use of an important and necessary data source and is well accepted. When the researcher has 'insider' knowledge related to the research question, results can be improved by adding this knowledge to the data. A qualitative approach to research utilising a heuristic hermeneutic phenomenological method as described, will ensure the appropriateness of including the interview data from the nurse researcher. It is appropriate to include the experience of the researcher provided the

methodological considerations of usability, credibility, auditability and trustworthiness and the philosophical choices underpinning the research are coherent and made explicit. This practice ensures rigour in the research and provides truthful, reliable results regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Ultimately the objective of health research (not just nursing research) should be to improve practice and aid in the provision of better health outcomes for all; ensuring methodological rigour assists in acceptance of qualitative research findings and allows a variety of perspectives to inform healthcare practice and policy development. Other options to engage with the researcher's experience could be explored further.

Author Contributions:

All authors have agreed on the final version and meet at least one of the following criteria (recommended by the ICMJE*):

- 1) substantial contributions to conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data;
- 2) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content.

* <http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/>

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Table 1. Nurses utilising their own experience as data

Author	Research
Moore (2012)	Moore discussed issues she encountered when as a lecturer and researcher, she observed the actions of nurse lecturers facilitating problem-based learning in seminars in higher education as an 'insider' researcher
Adams (2007)	Adams acknowledged that she had insider status as a nurse who had worked in nursing homes and included herself as a participant in her research after considering various forms of autoethnography. She was interviewed by her supervisor using the same interview schedule used on the participants in her research stating that this lead to a closer examination of her position. The participants were made aware of her insider status which she states had a positive effect on the interviews.
West et al. (2013)	Registered Nurse West inadvertently became an 'insider researcher' when she sustained a back injury whilst completing her PhD on chronic pain . She felt as if the participants were telling her story as their experience was very much like her own and now believes that "researchers without some insider knowledge will never come to realise the richness of a phenomenon that can be achieved with insider understanding" and acknowledges that "the relationship between the researcher and participant is far more complicated than indicated in the literature" p. 64.

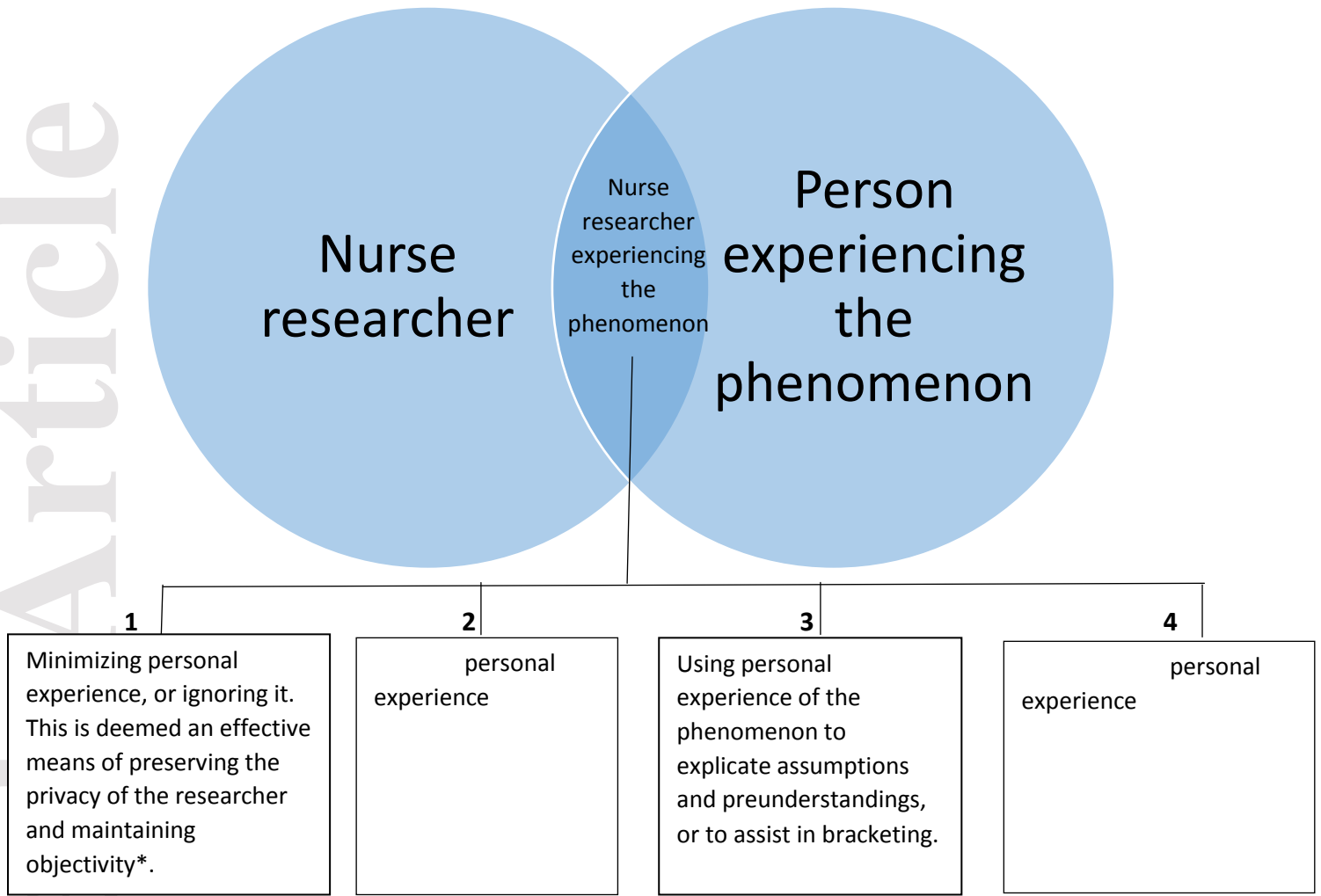


Figure 1. Positioning of researcher as person experiencing the phenomenon under consideration

*([Wilkinson and Kitzinger 2013](#))

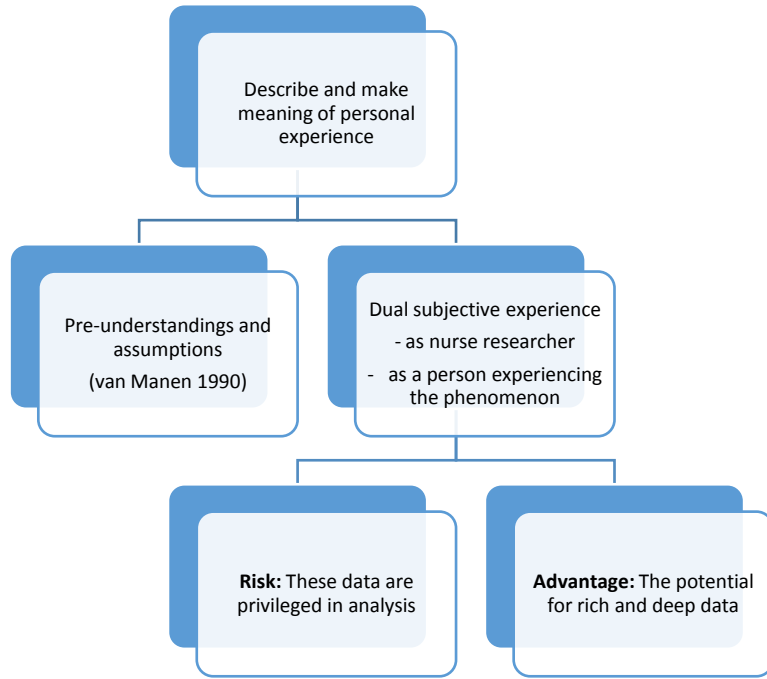


Figure 2. Key areas of focus for nurse researchers when using their own experience of a phenomenon within phenomenology

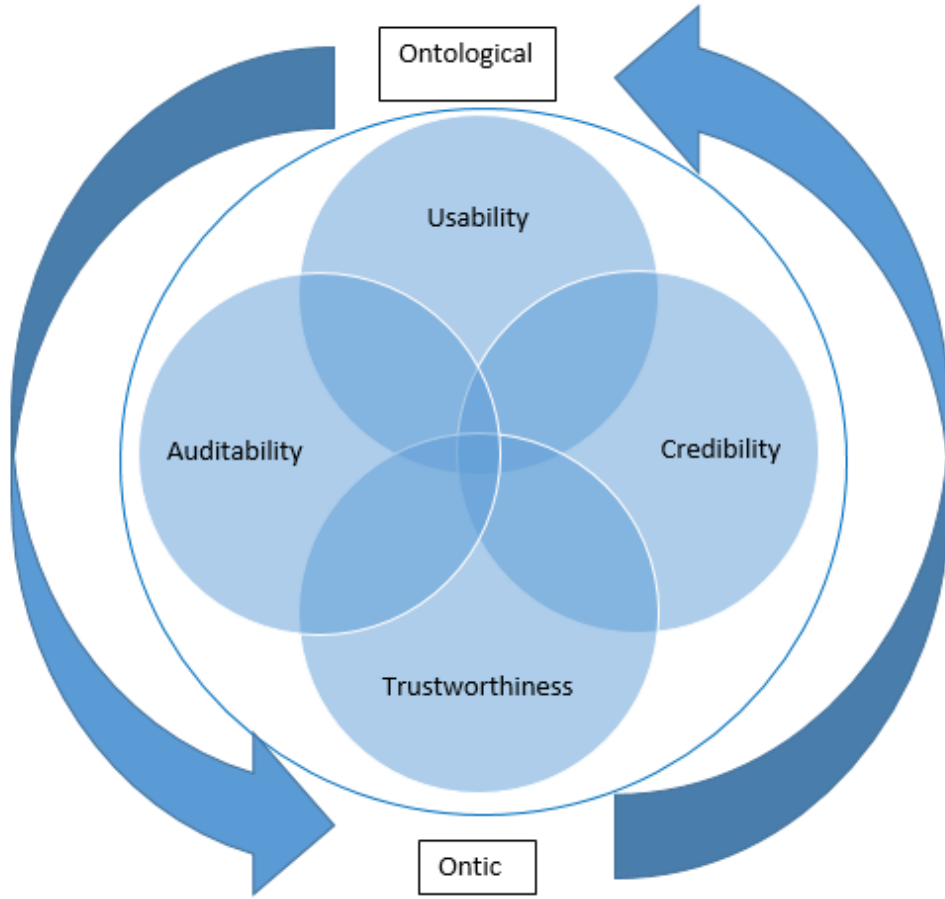


Figure 3. Four key methodological considerations related to data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting in phenomenological research