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OBSERVATION AS A DATA COLLECTION METHOD IN NURSING RESEARCHF. SADUYEVA ¹, D. AUEZKHANKYZY ², I. MEYERMANOVA ¹,
U. KHOJAKULOVA ², H. HOPIA ³¹ Karaganda Medical University, Karaganda, Kazakhstan² South Kazakhstan Medical Academy, Shymkent, Kazakhstan³ Jank University of Applied Sciences, Finland**Abstract**

Observation is a way of gathering research data by watching and/or listening behavior, characteristics, or events in their natural setting. It can be conducted as participant or non-participant observation. The term observation refers to a data collection method in which researchers investigate the ongoing behavior or performance of their research participants. Therefore, observation can be defined as a technique used for collecting descriptive data on characters, behavior, events, and situations used in observational studies. It is noteworthy to bear in mind that some researchers. Observation as a data collection method is being used, for example, in ethnographic, cross-sectional, and longitudinal observational studies. The method is quite often used in conjunction with other research methods, such as interviews, surveys, and document analysis. In this paper, we discuss strengths and limitations of observation in nursing research. The key advantage of the observation method is that it allows direct access to the social processes under investigation. For example, observation can help scientists comprehend how the healthcare staff influences the patient's or family member's decisions in ways that they may not recognize, explain, or articulate. Depending on the study objectives and topics, it can be employed qualitatively, quantitatively, or both. Overall, observation as a way of gathering data can lead to insights that are relevant to a variety of research questions, both fundamentally naturalistic and interpretive. Furthermore, it is a suitable method if the researchers are interested in data seen from different perspectives or if they want the participants to learn something from the process as well.

Key words: nursing, observation, qualitative research, ethnographic research.

Introduction. In observational studies, investigators observe the effect of a risk factor, treatment, nursing care, or other intervention without trying to change participants who are or are not exposed to it, whereas in experimental studies, researchers introduce an intervention studying the effects, testing hypotheses, and establishing causality [1]. The term observation refers to a data collection method in which researchers investigate the ongoing behavior or performance of their research participants. Therefore, observation can be defined as a technique used for collecting descriptive data on characters, behavior, events, and situations used in observational studies. It is noteworthy to bear in mind that some researchers (e.g., Salmon 2015; Twycross & Shorten 2016) use the term “observational method” when referring to observation as a way of gathering data for research purposes [2, 3]. Observation is applied in many healthcare and nursing studies to record patients', family members', or staff's behavior as well as when and where things happen in a specific context. It is particularly useful in the nursing science context because it allows the researcher to observe the study

subject's behavior as it occurs. Observation is often used alongside with other data collection methods such as interviews and different types of written documents [1, 2, 4].

The key advantage of the observation method is that it allows direct access to the social processes under investigation. For example, observation can help scientists comprehend how the healthcare staff influences the patient's or family member's decisions in ways that they may not recognize, explain, or articulate. Depending on the study objectives and topics, it can be employed qualitatively, quantitatively, or both [2, 3]. According to Balcom et al., observation is one of the most used data collection methods in ethnography research [5]. Regarding nursing research, observation has been used as a data collection method quite extensively, for example, when studying nursing home residents in their specific surroundings [6-10].

It is obvious that observation as a data collection method is a valuable technique for nurse researchers, as it allows for the study of natural characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena in real-world settings. Yet, there are important factors that should be considered when planning and conducting that type of data collection. We indicate and discuss some of those considerations and main issues when researchers seek to collect data through different types of observation methods in order to conduct high-quality nursing research.

Observation as a way of gathering data can take many approaches and forms. For instance, Gathara et al. conducted a cross-sectional study to describe the essential neonatal nursing care given to sick newborns [11]. Altogether, they observed a total of 216 babies against a direct observation checklist [11]. Babaei et al., on the other hand, explored compassionate behavior among Iranian nurses and collected data through fieldwork observations in ten hospital wards in their qualitative research [12]. Malfait et al. explored the effects of bedside handovers on the handover duration by comparing wards before and after the implementation of bedside handovers [13]. In their longitudinal observational study, the data were collected through observations (n=638), interviews (n=105), unstructured observations (n=40), and a review of time schedules (n=12) [13]. As realised in a previous study, Audulv et al. state that data collection in longitudinal observational studies includes several components, such as what entities are followed across time, the tempo of data collection, and to what extent the data collection is pre planned or adapted across time [14]. In paediatric oncology nursing, Roug et al. studied the experiences of children and adolescents with cancer who had received treatment through a portable infusion pump and their parents in managing different care [15]. The data were collected through ethnographic fieldwork comprising participant-families observation and semi structured interviews [15].

Collecting data through participant and non-participant observation. Observation may be participant or non-participant depending on whether the observer's role is active or passive [16]. Participant observation is realised through presence in the world of the studied phenomenon. That is, it is conducted through the study of processes and phenomena in the form in which they are lived, and not only in the form in which respondents report it. A distinctive feature of participant observation is the degree of participation and involvement of the researcher in the everyday life of the studied social group [17]. Thus, according to a study by van Meurs et al, the process of researching the spirituality of cancer patients was studied by examining the communication of nurses in conversation with the patient [18]. The researcher was a healthcare provider and a spiritual care consultant having the skills to study the spiritual dimension of patients. Thus, the investigator was regularly present and was familiar with the oncology department of the hospital where the study was conducted. The researcher observed and listened openly and inquisitively during the observation, paying special attention to how, when and whether the nurses approached the spiritual dimension with their patients [18].

A feature of the non-participatory observer is that a researcher participates in the field of study in order to understand the context and also observes the areas of interest. However, they are not directly involved in the activities of the participants and are not part of healthcare staff [16]. Observation can be covert or open. For example, the study by Sreeram et al. included open observation of mental health

nurses' performance in which all study participants were aware of the observation [19]. The investigators were academics trained in mental health nursing with extensive experience in hospital emergencies, which contributed to the understanding of professional languages and procedures in mental health units [19].

The main differences between participant and non-participant observation lie in the active or passive role of the researcher. In participant observation, the researcher seeks to immerse her/himself in the research environment in order to gain an internal understanding of the process. On the other hand, in non-participant observation, the researcher tries to understand the process and relationships from the side of an external observer. A non-participant observer may choose to take on different positions in the field: neutral, be engaged, or take sides. Non-participant observation might discover some aspects of a certain subculture, but full understanding can only be reached through an active involvement in their reality, experiencing first-hand their daily lives [16].

Observation as a data collection method is often used in ethnography research. Ethnographic observational studies facilitate an investigation, for instance, to identify the cultural components of health and illness. Ethnography is not one method, but a paradigm of mainly qualitative research involving direct observations of people and places [20]. Ethnography is primarily an inductive mode of research, which may utilise several methods of data collection. There fore, participant observation is often used in conjunction with interviewing. In Kelley's et al. study, for example, ethnographic data collection (participant observations, informal conversations, and in-depth interviews) was used to explore knowledge exchanges and decision-making within dementia care [21]. The use of observations, conversations, and repeated visits enabled the development of relationships with people living with dementia and tailoring of data collection to each person's communication abilities. Shan et al. applied the method of prospective observation using naturalistic observation and questioning; non-participatory observation was conducted for 152 nurses who also filled questionnaires including several scales to explore the potential influencing factors on nurse's mental workload and task performance [22]. Roug et al. studied the experiences of cancer by using ethnographic fieldwork comprising participant observation and semi-structured interviewing [15]. Moreover, Ahlstedt et al. conducted a qualitative explorative study with an ethnographic approach to explore registered nurses' workday events to better understand what influences registered nurses to remain in work [23]. The data contained participant observation for over four months; in total 56 hours with 479 events during observation and afterwards 58 informal interviews [23].

Some advantages and disadvantages. As noted above, observation as a data collect technique is valuable in nursing and healthcare research. However, as other data collection methods, it has pros and cons that must be considered [5]. First, one of the main advantages is that data collection can be conducted in real-world settings (naturalistic observation), which can provide a more accurate picture of individuals' or groups' behavior, opposed to remembering experiences and telling them in the interview or filling out the questionnaires. According to Twycross and Shorten, observation allows a first-hand account of actions and interactions to be obtained, thus allowing a picture of actual practices in nursing education, clinical practice, or healthcare leadership to be captured [3]. Second, observation is suitable when researchers need to identify rare events or contexts that are not easily identifiable in experimental designs. Therefore, data collected through observations can provide rich, detailed information on the behaviors and actions of individuals, staff members, or patient groups [4].

There are also several disadvantages related to observation as a way of gathering research data. It can be difficult to replicate, as the study results may be influenced by factors specific to the research participants or specific study settings. In addition, there can be issues with certain types of research, such as observing individuals, for example, with reduced cognitive capacity or who are severely ill. Furthermore, collecting data from vulnerable groups of people, such as children and young people, people with disabilities, prisoners, or homeless individuals, can raise concerns related to informed consent, patient privacy, and the potential for exploitation or producing harm. Another negative item,

according to Twycross and Shorten, can be that the study participants acknowledge that they are being observed, which often makes individuals self-conscious, and that may affect their behavior [3]. However, as Twycross and Shorten further claim, the results of multiple studies carried out in nursing fields suggest that as study participants grow accustomed to the observer's presence, their behavior will be closer to normal, everyday behavior [3]. A further disadvantage can be an investigator's expectations or personal views of study participants or observed situations, since this may jeopardise the collection of data and thus affect the reliability of the results [2, 24]. Last, in ethnographic studies in healthcare, the researcher often knows the field investigated and is known to the field as well [15]. On one hand, being an insider in the phenomenon under investigation can be an advantage when considering ease of access that can lead to unique opportunities for positioning in the field [15]. On the other hand, a researcher can be an insider and familiar with the present culture being studied, which can pose potential risks in overseeing important and relevant patterns of the phenomenon under investigation [15].

Conclusions. Overall, observation as a way of gathering data can lead to insights that are relevant to a variety of research questions, both fundamentally naturalistic and interpretive [22, 16]. According to Fry et al. the collection of observational data can enable insights to be gained into the meaning and significance of the way the world appears for a particular group [26]. Therefore, it can be an appropriate method to provide relevant information of participants' behavior, activities, and reactions. Suitable research targets for studying by observation are individuals and their relationships as well as groups with mutual interactions [16].

However, factors that may affect the results of the study such as changing the behavior of the observed in connection with the constraint or expectations of the researchers and the personal views of the subjects should be carefully considered [2, 3]. Data collected through observation are used to answer questions that generate either new knowledge about clinical problems in particular contexts of nursing care or confirm previous research study results in the same field [26, 27]. All in all, observation as a data collection method is suitable to be used in nursing research, for example, with an ethnographic approach. Furthermore, it is a suitable method if the researchers are interested in data seen from different perspectives or if they want the participants to learn something from the process as well [28].

Conflict of Interest. The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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БАҚЫЛАУДЫ МЕЙІРБИКЕЛІК ЗЕРТТЕУЛЕРДЕ ДЕРЕКТЕРДІ ЖИНАУ ӘДІСІ РЕТІНДЕ ҚОЛДАНУ

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Түйіндеме

Бақылау - бұл табиғи жағдайында мінез-құлықты, сипаттамаларды немесе оқиғаларды бақылау және/немесе тыңдау арқылы зерттеу деректерін жинау тәсілі. Ол қатысушы немесе қатысушысыз бақылау ретінде жүргізілуі мүмкін. Бақылау – табиғи жағдайда мінез-құлықты, сипаттарды немесе оқиғаларды көру және / немесе тыңдау арқылы зерттеу деректерін жинау тәсілі. Ол қатысушы немесе қатысушы емес бақылау ретінде жүргізілуі мүмкін. Бақылау термині зерттеушілер өздерінің зерттеуге қатысушыларының тұрақты мінез-құлқын немесе өнімділігін зерттейтін деректерді жинау әдісін білдіреді. Сондықтан бақылауды бақылау зерттеулерінде қолданылатын кейіпкерлер, мінез-құлық, оқиғалар мен жағдайлар туралы сипаттама деректерін жинау үшін қолданылатын әдіс ретінде анықтауға болады. Бақылау мәліметтерді жинау әдісі ретінде, мысалы, этнографиялық, көлденең және бойлық бақылау зерттеулерінде қолданылады. Бұл әдіс сұхбат, сауалнама және құжаттарды талдау сияқты басқа зерттеу әдістерімен бірге жиі қолданылады. Бұл мақалада біз мейіргерлік зерттеулердегі

бақылаудың күшті жақтары мен шектеулерін талқылаймыз. Бақылау әдісінің басты артықшылығы оның зерттелетін әлеуметтік процестерге тікелей қол жеткізуге мүмкіндік беруінде. Мысалы, бақылау ғалымдарға медицина қызметкерлерінің емделушінің немесе отбасы мүшелерінің шешімдеріне олар мойындамайтын, түсіндірмейтін немесе білдірмейтін жолдармен қалай әсер ететінін түсінуге көмектеседі. Оқу мақсаттары мен тақырыптарына байланысты ол сапалы, сандық немесе екеуінде де қолданылуы мүмкін. Тұтастай алғанда, деректерді жинау тәсілі ретінде бақылау іргелі натуралистік және интерпретациялаушы әртүрлі зерттеу сұрақтарына қатысты түсініктерге әкелуі мүмкін. Сонымен қатар, егер зерттеушілер әртүрлі көзқарастардағы деректерге қызығушылық танытса немесе қатысушылар процестен бірдеңе үйренгісі келсе, бұл қолайлы әдіс.

Түйін сөздер: мейіргер іс, бақылау, сапалық зерттеу, этнографиялық зерттеу.

НАБЛЮДЕНИЕ КАК МЕТОД СБОРА ДАННЫХ В ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯХ СЕСТРИНСКОГО ДЕЛА

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Аннотация

Наблюдение - это способ сбора данных исследования путем наблюдения и/или прослушивания поведения, характеристик или событий в их естественной обстановке, проводится как включенное, так и не включенное. Термин «наблюдение» относится к методу сбора данных, при котором исследователи исследуют постоянное поведение или результаты своих участников исследования. Следовательно, наблюдение можно определить, как метод, используемый для сбора описательных данных о персонажах, поведении, событиях и ситуациях, используемых в наблюдательных исследованиях. Наблюдение как метод сбора данных используется, например, в этнографических, поперечных и лонгитюдных наблюдательных исследованиях. Наблюдение используется в комплексе с другими методами исследования, такими как интервью, опросы, анализ документов. В этой статье мы обсуждаем сильные и слабые стороны наблюдения в исследованиях сестринского дела. Ключевое преимущество метода наблюдения состоит в том, что он позволяет получить прямой доступ к исследуемым социальным процессам. Например, наблюдение может помочь ученым понять, как медицинский персонал влияет на решения пациента или члена семьи способами, которые они могут не осознавать, не объяснить или не сформулировать. В зависимости от целей и тем исследования его можно использовать качественно, количественно или и то, и другое. В целом наблюдение как способ сбора данных используется в научных исследованиях, как фундаментальных, прикладных, так и интерпретативных. Кроме того, это подходящий метод, если исследователи заинтересованы в данных, рассматриваемых с разных точек зрения, или если они хотят, чтобы участники тоже чему-то научились в ходе процесса.

Ключевые слова: сестринское дело, наблюдение, качественное исследование, этнографическое исследование.