



Methodological Considerations for Capturing Youth Perspectives on Future Medical Practice in Lesotho

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Abstract

Understanding youth perspectives is essential for shaping future medical practice, particularly in regions with substantial healthcare challenges. In Lesotho, a large youth population will constitute the next generation of practitioners and patients, yet their insights are inadequately represented in formal health sector planning. A rigorous methodology is needed to capture these views authentically. This article describes the methodological framework for a study designed to capture and analyse youth perspectives on the future of medical practice in Lesotho. Its primary objective is to detail the development and rationale for a mixed-methods approach that prioritises cultural relevance, inclusivity, and methodological rigour. The methodology employs a sequential exploratory mixed-methods design. Phase one involves focus group discussions with youth from diverse educational and regional backgrounds to generate initial themes. Phase two utilises a nationally representative survey, informed by the qualitative findings, to quantify these perspectives. The paper details ethical considerations, including informed assent and consent, and strategies for engaging hard-to-reach groups. As a methodology article, this paper presents no empirical research findings. It details the developed methodological framework. A key procedural finding was the necessity of incorporating visual aids and scenario-based prompts within focus groups to effectively elicit views on abstract future concepts. The proposed methodology offers a structured, culturally attuned approach for gathering youth insights on medical futures in Lesotho. It addresses challenges in engaging young people on long-term professional topics and aims to produce findings actionable for health policy and education planning. Researchers conducting similar studies in comparable settings should prioritise participatory design elements, allocate substantial time for building trust with youth participants, and pilot all data collection tools extensively within the local context to ensure comprehension and relevance. methodology, youth perspectives, medical futures, Lesotho, mixed-methods, healthcare planning This article provides a detailed methodological framework for researchers and policymakers seeking to incorporate youth perspectives into health sector planning in Lesotho and similar contexts, emphasising culturally sensitive and rigorous engagement techniques.

Keywords: *Qualitative Research, Sub-Saharan Africa, Youth Engagement, Health Systems Research, Participatory Methods, Medical Education, Lesotho*



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