There's another point of view: Use of mixed method and other types of research as evidence.

Role of consumers in research.

Irene Anne Jillson, PhD
Associate Professor
Georgetown University
Washington DC
iaj@georgetown.edu

Use of mixed method and other types of research as evidence.

Quantitative research: An overview

The essence of quantitative research design

- Assumption: there is a reality that can be studied and known.
  - Nature is essentially ordered and regular; an objective reality exists independent of human observation.
- Use of the 'scientific method'
  - Orderly, disciplined procedures to acquire empirical information/ evidence.

The essence, cont'd.

- Uses deductive reasoning to generate ideas that are tested in the real world.
- Use of mechanisms to control the study:
  - Minimize biases and maximize precision and validity.
  - Controlling for factors not under direct investigation.
- Formal measurement analyzed with statistical procedures.
- Generalizability – degree to which research findings can be generalized to individuals other than study participants – a criterion for assessing quality of quantitative studies.

How do quantitative studies apply to disaster/humanitarian aid research?

- Comparisons:
  - between two or more groups.
  - of one group's status at two or more points in time.
  - of one group's status under different circumstances.
- Randomization.
- Quasi-experimental designs.
  - Non equivalent control group only post-test design-as above, but unable to get any pretest data.

Introducing qualitative research

Defining qualitative research

- Generally, qualitative research generates narrative, detailed information that contributes to in-depth understanding of the context in which the phenomenon, issue, or intervention under study takes place.

- Non-experimental:
  - The researcher observes phenomena as they naturally occur without intervening.

Qualitative research is used…

- To explore an issue or problem or practice for which there is scant data.
  - Or to explore an issue or problem from a different perspective.
- To inform design of quantitative research.
- To inform interpretation of quantitative findings:
  - What do the numbers really mean?
  - How can they be explained?
  - What more can we learn from them?
  - How can we explain differences?
    - among categories of populations:
      - Culture.
      - Age.
      - Gender.
      - By geographic area.

Study design characteristics

- Research questions
  - Not intended to yield generalizable data.
  - Exploration of a phenomenon.
- Sample selection
  - Purposive, snowball, saturation.
- Data collection methods
  - Individual interviews.
  - Group discussions.
  - Observation.
  - Can involve merging various strategies.

Study design characteristics, cont'd.

- Analysis:

  the *meaning* of the responses/comments
  Increasingly rigorous

- Flexibility.

- Requires intense involvement in data collection and analysis.

Summary of qualitative methods…

- Explain numbers.
- Help to understand an issue.
- Tell a story.

Linking qualitative and quantitative research to enhance understanding of disaster response: Mixed methods

Advantages of combining both types of research

- Research development:
  - One approach is used to inform the other.
    - Exploring the policy and/or research questions.
    - Study design.
    - Developing the data collection instruments.
    - Analysis and interpretation of findings.

Advantages of mixed methods, cont'd.

- Increased validity:
  - Confirmation of results through triangulation of data sources.
- Complementarity:
  - Adding information – narrative to numbers and vice versa.
- Creating new lines of thinking:
  - Different perspectives, worldviews.

Approaches to mixed method research

- *Qualitative* method (e.g., focus groups and/or in-depth interviews) used to:
  - identify key domains to include in quantitative study (e.g., household survey post-disaster).
  - further understand findings of a household survey post-disaster.
  - elicit viewpoints of key national policy makers regarding response of international donor community.
- *Quantitative* study includes:
  - household survey and observation of post-disaster emergency medical practice.
  - household survey of client population and in-depth interviews with providers.

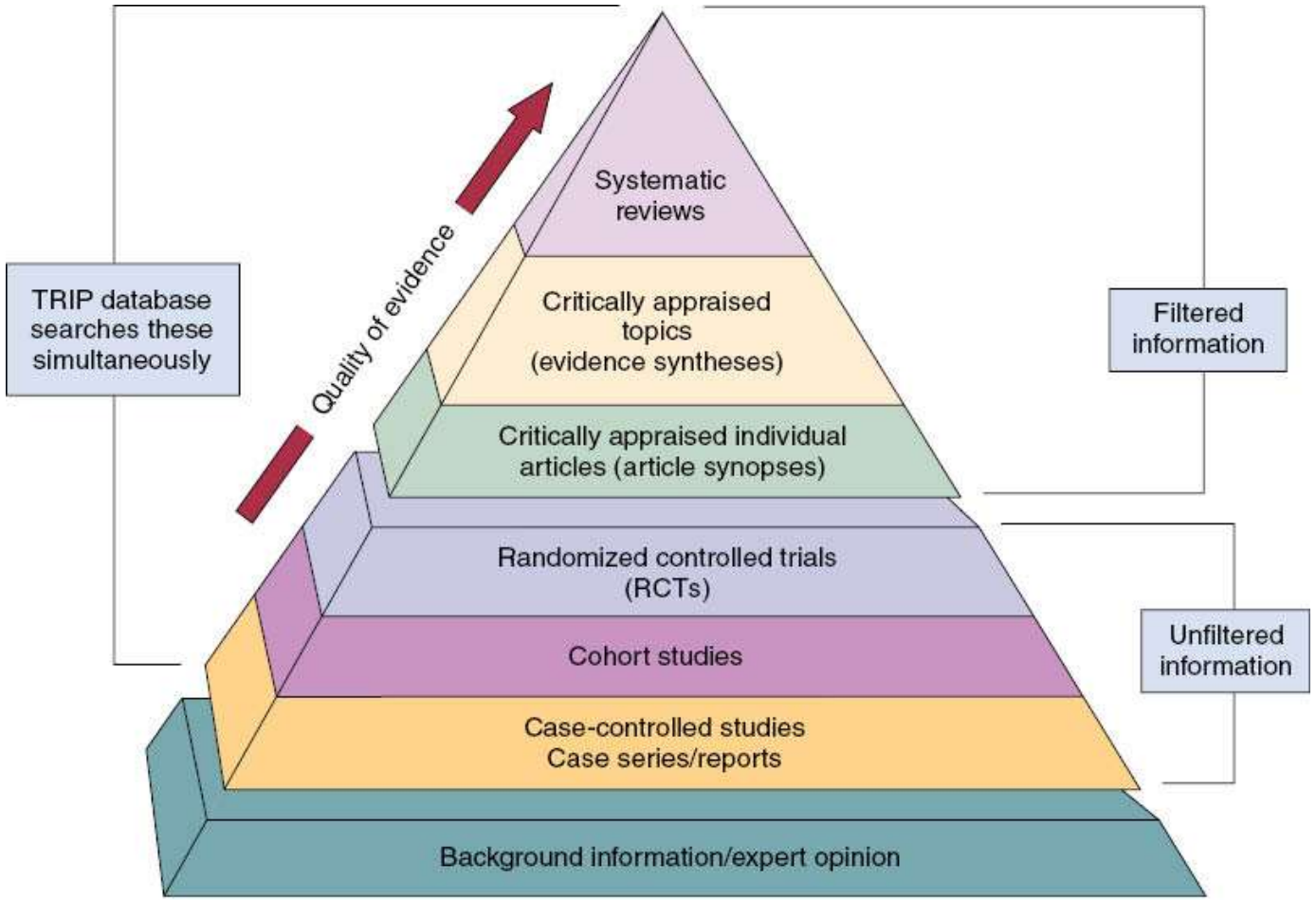

Figure 3-3 The 5S levels of organization of evidence from health care research.

Where does mixed method research fit/belong on this pyramid and how can the date/information inform disaster planning/response?

Role of consumers in research related to disaster response

The dialogue continues…

- **Defining consumers:**
  - General public.
  - Populations of people who have directly experienced disaster or who are at high risk.
  - Emergency response personnel.
  - Health, education, transportation, utilities and other public sector service providers.
  - Public sector planners and policy makers.
  - Private sector – businesses, for-profit organizations.
  - Private sector, non-profit responders/donors.
  - Other?

The dialogue continues…

- **Defining the role of consumers**
  - identifying relevant outcomes and questions.
  - participating in:
    - research design.
    - conduct of research.
    - data analysis.
    - interpretation of findings.
  - engagement in policy recommendations.

The dialogue continues…

- **Practical realities:**
  - Who engages consumers?
  - How are they engaged?
  - Who funds the research?
  - Who decides?