

feel that specific communication skills training is needed.

**Conclusions:** Better communication skills for all health professionals involved in providing immunisation information might reduce the impact of another vaccine scare.

**Recommended reading:**

The Information Centre. NHS Immunisation Statistics England 2006-2007. <http://www.ic.nhs.uk/statistics-and-data-collections/health-and-life-styles/immunisation/nhs-immunisation-statistics-england-2006-07-%5Bns%5D> (accessed 31st October 2007)

Smailbegovic MS, Laing GJ, Bedford H. Why do Parents Decide Against Immunisation? The Effect of Health Beliefs and Health Professionals. *Child: Care, Health and Development* 2003;29(4): 303-311

Henderson R, Oates K, Macdonald H, Smith WC. General Practitioners' Concerns About Childhood Immunisation and Suggestions for Improving Professional Support and Vaccine Uptake. *Communicable Disease & Public Health* 2004;7(4): 260-6

a policy Delphi study will then be discussed with consideration given to panel selection and recruitment, defining the 'expert', quasi-anonymity, questionnaire formulation and revision between rounds, data analysis and feedback to panellists, respondent fatigue, administrative concerns and timeframe management. The policy Delphi technique is an underused tool in nursing research, and used appropriately can provide an innovative approach to investigating individual and group perceptions of issues within the health care arena and the direction in which nursing should be moving. Methodological and administrative observations of the use of the technique will facilitate the promotion of its future use in nursing research.

1.3.2

**Developing workable methods: Aligning a research priority, patient involvement and complex assessments**

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**Abstract:**

**Background:** During the acute phase of stroke, deterioration in nutritional status and weight loss is common. Malnutrition has been associated with increased morbidity, mortality and dependency after a stroke. Changes in taste and smell function have been reported amongst some patients following stroke, and linked to poor dietary intake, but have not been comprehensively explored after stroke.

**Aims:** To test the feasibility of a study protocol to measure taste and smell function in acute stroke patients.

**Methods:** Patients were recruited from one Stroke Unit between November 2007 and January 2008. Data were collected at 3 time points; once the patients were medically stable, once oral dietary intake was re-established and one month post-stroke. Data included assessment of taste and smell function, appetite, nutritional status, 24 hour food intake and mood. Issues arising from protocol delivery including barriers to recruitment and patient perspectives of data collection tools were recorded.

**Results:** Recruitment from this vulnerable population, to a demanding assessment schedule, was challenging. Only seven out of eighty-seven admissions were recruited over the ten-week period. Early discharge from the Stroke Unit, once medically stable, reduced opportunities for recruitment; while many of those who remained were too unwell to be approached. Furthermore, the protocol required stroke to be confirmed by CT scan rather than clinical diagnosis, excluding many suitable patients. Seven participants were recruited

with complete data collected from four patients. Reasons for incomplete data included unavailability to follow up after discharge, voluntary withdrawal, decline in physical and mental state and entry into another trial. Nevertheless, patients who took part in the study found the data collection tools acceptable.

**Conclusions:** The study design, including recruitment strategy, was revised following the feasibility study. It addresses the issue: how to format a complex and lengthy assessment schedule while minimising the impact on the participant population.

**Recommended reading:**

Davalos A, Ricart W, Gonzalez-Huiz F et al (1996) Effect of Malnutrition After Acute Stroke on Clinical Outcome. *Stroke* 27, 6: 1028-1032

Gariballa SE, Parker SG, Taub N et al (1998) Influence of Nutritional Status on Clinical Outcome after Acute Stroke. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 68, 2: 275-281

Health Advisory Service 2000 (1998) Not Because They are Old. London

1.3.3

**Keeping concept analysis in context – a confirmatory and validatory process**

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**Abstract:**

This methodological paper describes the confirmatory and validatory processes that were used to anchor the concept of bullying within the context of midwifery. The use of concept analysis allows the researcher to examine the structure and function of concepts (Walker & Avant 2005). However, Unsworth (2000) suggests that one of the criticisms of concept analysis is that it removes the concept from its context. Clearly the researcher needs to be aware of the context of the research from the outset and to maintain this awareness of the context throughout. This context-intelligence (Holloway 2005) is vital so that the researcher may fully understand the life world of the participants and consequently the phenomenon that is being studied is seen in its most appropriate context. In this research, Context intelligence was maximised in two ways. Confirmatory focus groups were undertaken with practising midwives, midwife managers, academic midwives and union representatives (n=30) to validate and confirm the concept analysis. Secondly, the attributes emerging from the concept analysis were tested using a questionnaire survey with student midwives (n=164). This presentation will focus on design issues including rigour, ethical challenges and interpretation. In addition, it will highlight the unique contribution of this research to knowledge.

Theme: Research methods

1.3.1

**The policy Delphi technique in nursing education research: Personal insights into the complexities and use of the technique**

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**Abstract:**

**Background & context:** The Policy Delphi technique is a variant of the conventional Delphi and differs in terms that it does not unequivocally seek to find a consensus but rather explores consensus and reasons for any lack of consensus thereby highlighting a range of options on a particular topic. This paper will examine the methodological and administrative intricacies encountered while conducting a policy Delphi study investigating the clinical role of lecturers in nursing in Ireland.

**Aims:** To briefly review the mechanism of the Policy Delphi technique. To highlight methodological and administrative factors to be considered when conducting a policy Delphi study.

**Outline of Main Content:** The policy Delphi technique was used to investigate the perceptions of the key-stakeholder groups involved in nurse education on the clinical role of the lecturer in nursing in Ireland. Policy Delphi was used in an attempt to reveal the whole spectrum of different views and the polarity of these views within and between the different stakeholder groups. A brief review of the mechanisms of the technique will be initially considered. Experiences of conducting