Phenomenology, Hermeneutics and Inquiry Based Research within the Human Sciences

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Today

- Introduction
- Participatory Research
- Interpretive phenomenology an overview
- An overview of phenomenology and hermeneutics in human science research
- Other research
- Conversation
Partners in our Care: Patient Safety from a Patient Perspective

Awaiting / Journal of Quality and Safety in Health Care …

Participatory Research Team
Hovey, Morck, Nettleton, Robin, Findlay, Bullis, and Massfeller

Patients & Family Members (PFSC)
Alberta Health Systems Representatives (CHR)
Interpretive Researchers
Interpretive inquiry involves the selection of participants that can appropriately inform a perspective on a particular topic and invite new understanding of it.
Patient’s voice?

- **Lyons**: “Should patients have a role in patient safety?”
- **Entwistle**: “Differing perspectives on patient involvement in patient safety” articles.

Problem?

- Talked about patients but not with them.
- What was the patient's point of view?
Patient and Family Safety Council invited to write interpretive memo responses in reaction to the articles

- 4 PFSC members wrote interpretive memos perspectives as patients and family.

- The research team grounded within the interpretive phenomenological tradition
Participatory Process

The process of analysis in this study involved the individual interpretive scholars thorough reading of the textual interpretive memos and subsequent writing of their own analytical interpretations.

Back to the whole
The final analysis of the narrative data returned to the 11 PFSC members

Ensuring that the patient’s voice accurately reflected perceptions about the patient's role in patient safety
The Tension

Patient and family centred care and involving patients in promoting safety are intended to complement the services of health care providers, not to replace them. Health care is a humanistic field. In my opinion, it should be viewed in terms of quality, including the successful relationship between the (health care) provider and the patient. The importance of safety in that relationship is a given.

(Member, PFSC, 2008)
Pros …

- self-interest and motivation for a good outcome
- the patient is available and proximally close to the situation so that “if a symptom changes, the patient will be the first link in the chain to experience and have the opportunity to communicate this change”
predictable reliability

Lyons:

“we cannot assume a patient or family member to have skills or personalities to positively contribute to the care process.”
Cons ...

Breakdown:

- Concern about patient diversity, age, culture, personality, language, intelligence, and human factors could potentially negate any reliable implementation of patient involvement was argued by Lyons.

- Defaulting to a generalization about ALL patients
Patient as evidence

With regard to the cons that she (Lyons) stated, I personally find it undermining and condescending, “Although it could be seen as an enormous asset if patients were clinically skilled and confident enough to define, clarify and update their own care pathways”. This implies that the patient voice is not only not valued but any skill that they may possess is dismissed as incompetent.

(Member, PFSC, 2008)
Information Retention and the Distressed Patient

Lyons offered evidence to demonstrate that patients do not retain information provided to them by the health care practitioner.

“I think that educating and encouraging patients to be more involved in their care can help and improve patient safety. If the focus on patient safety doesn’t begin with, and include the patient, a valuable piece of the health care process is lost.”

(Member, PFSC, 2008).
Who needs to know that …

Adults do not learn well when

- Distressed
- Subjected to new and confusing jargon / professional language / appropriate level
- Content and context of adult learning theories and principles are not practiced or even known
Tension / Assumptions

one perspective about patient safety for medical audiences …
medical journals / CE / Conferences

- Dismissing the Patient voice as a valid source of evidence …
- Medical students
- Communication
- Medical Partners
Other Research

Patient safety:
- CAPS – 100 + interviews
- Developing health professional educational approaches that transcend pedagogical models
- Interpreting the patient as partners in their and other’s care

Prostate cancer education
- Chronic illness
- Reflective education for health care professionals
- Communication
- Adult learning for patients
- Transformational experiences for children
Interpretative Studies

Leder (1990) stated, “I further suggest that certain flaws in modern medicine arise from its refusal of a hermeneutical self understanding. In seeking to escape all interpretive subjectivity, medicine has threatened to expunge its primary subject-the living, breathing, experiencing patient” (p. 9).
Hermeneutic Interpretation

[to explain about what happened to my mother is]... “like putting your hand in a pocket full of razorblades. It’s very painful and people don’t necessarily see the little small cuts. But I feel it’s very important that I speak out about my experience.”

(Sherry, CAPS Interview 2008)
Pockets

- Metaphorical pockets the deep and private places in our minds, where we think, meditate, remember, feel, and suffer.
- Razorblades
- Small cuts nobody can see
- Scar tissue
- Blood letting
- We live not to suffer / avoid events, encounters and relationships / pain
- Secrets / conceal
To live authentically means to wake up, to be shaken / disrupted / thrown from our day-to-day living

- emotional cost of bringing these to the forefront of our existence. if I reach too deeply into this pocket:
  - Will I survive these wounds?
  - Will I be able to recover from these wounds?
  - Who can I tell?
  - Am I losing my sense of self?
  - How do I get back?
life without razorblades in pockets

10 years …
- Vulnerability
- Searching for answers
- No one took responsibility for mother’s death
- Medical error

recovery of self
- Disclosure
- Perspective
- Transformation
- Consumers Advancing Patient Safety
- Trust
- Vulnerability
Vulnerability

- Often perceived as a frailty, a fatal flaw or weakness

- Latin *vulnerabilis*: meaning to wound or open

- To Levinas (1996) this opening of self, being susceptible to physical or emotional injury in being vulnerable, is the inescapable call revealed in the face of the other.
Vulnerability

This sense of vulnerability does not point to frailty, dependence or loss of social autonomy.

Rather, it is connected to recognition of the suffering of another. In this way we are signifying an openness and nearness available for the other.

This form of vulnerability is requisite to relational ethics.
According to Levinas (1996) it is the pivotal loci of responsibility for another human being.

A call to ethics in relationship begins with this interruption of self by self (Levinas, 1996).
“Well, it’s more like she was falling and nobody tried to catch her.”

“Well, first they lost their sister, they lost their mother, and they didn’t really understand the anger. They didn’t understand the things that they picked up about the doctor that we had so highly regarded all of a sudden was now the bad guy. And my three-year-old looked at me one day about four months or so after my daughter died and he said, “Mommy, did the doctors hurt Annie?” You think about what was going on in his mind and I said, “Well, it’s more like she was falling and nobody tried to catch her.” So I think we’ll have many issues to work through in the years to come as a result of the event.” (Sabina, CAPS, 2008)
Phenomenology

Phenomenology is concerned with a thing, or topic, which occurs in the world and has to do with a person and their experience of that thing or topic.
Interpretive phenomenology as a method (research literature)

- Used to uncover the understanding of phenomena experienced by individuals through the analysis of their descriptions.

The Three Schools of Phenomenology
The first school is eidetic / Husserl

Descriptive phenomenology

- obtain a fundamental knowledge of phenomena.
- objective in nature / interpretation not openly discussed
- reduction of the phenomenon objectivity consistent with the positivist paradigm
- bracketing out other influences as the means to finding the essence of a phenomenon was to understand it.
Heidegger, Husserl’s Student ...

Created a shift in emphasis from Husserlian phenomenology which is concerned with description. And the nature of knowledge as an epistemological knowing of some-thing.
Human-being as Being

...toward understanding the nature of existence as ontological

Being-in-the-world
Life-world
Day-to-day
The second school of phenomenology Heidegger ...

Interpretation as a means to understand text / actions / art / experience / traditions / history ...

- Heidegger’s incorporation of hermeneutics
- clarify the conditions of understanding for the purposes of ontology
“Bracketing” out one’s prejudgement is replaced.

Presuppositions are not to be eliminated or suspended because they help with the interpretations.
Heideggerian phenomenology

- Understanding the topic is not complete until it is interpreted through the conceptualization of the hermeneutic circle.

- The phenomenology Heidegger presents is different from Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology because of interpretation.
Moving to understanding in context

Hermeneutic inquiry grounded by Heidegger is referred to as

- hermeneutics
- interpretative
- phenomenology
- or
- Existential phenomenology
Philosophical Hermeneutics is used when referring specifically to the work of Gadamer’s branch of hermeneutics. Hermeneutic-phenomenology
The Third School is guided by the Dutch School

This phenomenology is a combination of descriptive and Interpretative Phenomenology Making Phenomenology available to many!

How to do phenomenology
Van Manen (1997), of the Dutch School, states, “Phenomenology describes how one orients to lived experience, hermeneutics describes how one interprets the ‘text’ of life. Furthermore, hermeneutic phenomenology is different from phenomenology as it comprehends the project of phenomenology intellectually and understands it ‘from the inside’ (p.8).
Hermes’ (the trickster) / The Raven

- communications from the gods to humans was never clear, straightforward or explicit
- messages meant to be interpreted
- interpretation finds the meaning hidden within the text – deeper
Raven spirits are usually seen as jokesters and pranksters.

Raven in America, particularly the Northwest coast region, is both demiurge (a very strong, driving, and influential force or personality) and trickster, both hero and villain, and often at once and the same time.

Raven is the greatest shape shifter of them all, being able to change into anyone and anything to get what he wants.
art of understanding

Gadamer (1996), “If we put ourselves in someone else’s shoes, for example, then we will understand him [we then] become aware of the otherness, the indissoluble individuality of the other person--by putting ourselves in his position” (p. 304-305).

(bracketed added by Hovey, 2008)
the task of hermeneutics

Ricoeur (1984) …to reconstruct the set of operations by which a work lifts itself above the opaque depths of living, acting, and suffering, to be given by an author to readers who receive it and thereby change their acting” (p. 53).
Hermeneutics as a *methodology* …
End

Thank You!
References


Consumers Advancing Patient Safety: envisions a partnership between consumers and providers to create global health care systems that are safe compassionate and just. http://www.patientsafety.org/ (accessed Jan 2008)


References


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