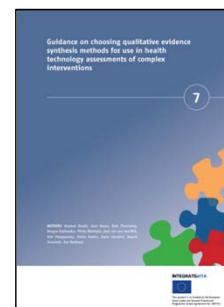


QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS (QES)

How to choose appropriate qualitative synthesis methods when examining complexity within an HTA or systematic review

Purpose of QES guidance

- Summarise current choices in the use of QES methods within HTAs and systematic reviews
- Offer helpful mnemonic, RETREAT, to help choose an appropriate method of QES
- Describe and characterizes the distinctive features of each method of QES



The guidance on the choice of QES methods in health technology assessments of complex interventions can be downloaded from: <http://www.integrate-hta.eu/downloads/>

Subdomains representing more detailed considerations for choice of qualitative synthesis method

| Review Question | Epistemology | Time/ Timeframe | Resources | Expertise | Audience & Purpose | Type of Data |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Fixed | Generation of Theory | Degree of Iteration | Personnel | In Qualitative Research | Academics | Thin/Thick |
| Emerging | Exploration of Theory | Degree of Integration | Funding | In Systematic Reviewing | Policymakers | Rich/Poor |
| | Testing of Theory | Points of Integration | Effort | In Topic Area | Practitioners | Individual Article |
| | Idealist | | | In Theory | Developers of Interventions | Body of Literature |
| | Realist | | | In Literature searching | | Theory |
| | Aggregative | | | Disciplinary, Methodological and Perspective Mix | | Likely number of relevant studies |
| | Interpretive/ Configurative | | | | | Unit of Analysis |

Added value of QES

- Help to incorporate patient perspectives into an assessment of a complex intervention and its implementation in context.
- Hold explanatory potential in understanding how a complex intervention achieves its effect.
- Serve as a framework for subsequent juxtaposition with an effectiveness review or HTA
- Assist in ensuring a holistic approach within the HTA or systematic review team and with stakeholders
- The guidance can be applied as part of the INTEGRATE-HTA model (see the guidance on integrated assessment) and as a standalone.

