Can “Debrief” Reports Expedite Qualitative Studies? 
A Post-Hoc Analysis of VOICE-D Trial Data (Abstract #300)

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BACKGROUND

- Use of written “debrief” reports (DR) to summarize qualitative interviews is an increasingly employed method to expedite the sharing of key observations within research teams.
- When collected and reviewed in an on-going manner, as qualitative interviews are implemented, use of DR may:
  - Identify potential problems with trial implementation or engagement
  - allow for adaptations to interview guides and leverage interviewer expertise
  - capture high-order themes in specific content areas
- Utility of DR depends on text accuracy, which could be eroded by:
  - bias in inclusion or exclusion of highlights
  - inability to retain and convey important information
  - other factors that ultimately distance the data in DR from the complete transcripts.
- We examined accuracy of DR from VOICE-D, a qualitative study of former VOICE participants in South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

METHODS

- A random sample (N=20) of 88 VOICE-D in-depth interview transcript and DR pairs, conducted by 5 interviewers, were compared for concordance/discordance by trained social and behavioral scientists.
- DR for VOICE-D contained interviewer observations of three main IDI themes. This analysis focused on “motivations for joining the VOICE trial” and “study product adherence.”
- Two raters reviewed each DR-transcript pair to identify content (1) in DR and transcript and (a) accurately represented or (b) lacking specific nuance; (2) in DR but not found in transcript; or (3) in transcript and of relevance but not in the DR
- DR were rated as superior (1), acceptable (2), or unacceptable (3)

RESULTS

Inter-rater Reliability
- 13 of 20 pairs of raters gave the same DR-transcript concordance score
- Among the 7 that diverged, all were 1 point or less apart
- Discrepancies were resolved by discussion after re-review of transcripts and DR

High Quality of DR
- The majority of DR accurately described the interview with only 1 interview-DR pair receiving an unacceptable score. Only a few critical discrepancies were noted, resulting in a less than superior score.
  - Superior (n=8)
  - Acceptable (n=11)
  - Unacceptable (n=1)

Suggestions for Optimizing DR Form
- Have clear and specific purpose for DR
- Structure DR to reflect ordered sequence of interview if possible
- Include specific headings in DR to reflect interview guide or specific target questions of interest

Suggestions for Optimizing DR Process
- Deliver adequate training on how to complete DR
- Conduct ongoing quality assessment of DR
- Have a trained note taker present during interview
- Complete DR immediately after interview to facilitate accuracy

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, DR performed well at capturing the main themes of in-depth interviews. We noted only a few critical items missing from DR that might influence interpretations of interview data or inform study adaptation. As few investigators have time to review study transcripts, well-designed and implemented DR may expedite the impact of qualitative interviews.

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