

THE RESEARCH PURPOSE

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Definition of Research Purpose

The research purpose is a statement of "why" the study is being conducted, or the goal of the study. The goal of a study might be to identify or describe a concept or to explain or predict a situation or solution to a situation that indicates the type of study to be conducted (Beckingham, 1974).

The purpose statement identifies the variables, population and setting for a study. Every study has an explicit or implicit purpose statement.

The research purpose should be stated objectively or in a way that does not reflect particular biases or values of the researcher.

Researchers which do not recognize their values might include their biases in their research.

This can lead the researcher to generate the answers they want or believe to be true and might add inaccurate information to a discipline's body of knowledge (Kaplan, 1964).

The purpose is generated from the research problem and clearly focuses the development of the study. For example, Mallick's (1982) study included the following research

problem: "Unsupervised dieting occurs partly because promulgation of diets and dispensation of diet aides (appetite suppressants, diet foods) are not regulated by law, and widespread use of various reducing diets and the attendant side effects have not been examined extensively."

The purpose of this study was to "examine the characteristics of female adolescent dieters, the types of diets followed and the occurrence of health problems in relation to these diets."

The research problem indicates the area of concern, which is dieting and the side effects of dieting. The purpose of this descriptive study was to generate specific knowledge about adolescent dieters, their dieting activities and the occurrence of health problems related to their diets.

In the research process, the purpose is usually stated after the problem, supports the problem and clarifies the knowledge to be generated for nursing.

Examples of the Research Problem and Purpose

General Topics Formal Research Problem – Purpose

1- Sleep patterns, Ageing process

Problem

Because of the lack of norms (for changes in sleep patterns with age), nurses and patients tend to evaluate a hospitalized older person's sleep on the basis of sleep norms for younger adults.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the nature of sleep behaviors among hospitalized older persons of different ages.

2. Skin integrity, Intervention

Problem

Because decubitus ulcers occur in hospitalized patients despite preventive measures, methods

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of topical application of insulin to promote healing of decubitus ulcers in hospitalized patients.

3. Cardiac response, Auditory stimulation

Problem

Some of the emotional difficulties clinically associated with prematurity, such as restlessness, irritability and lack of attentiveness, emotional liability, and uncontrolled anger, may be the product of under stimulation. The rationale is that premature infants in SCBUs may fail to

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were differences in cardiac responsiveness between premature infants who were exposed to the mother's voice while hospitalized and premature infants who did not receive this variation of sensory input.

Study Questions: For each Problem, identify the concepts to be studied,

For each Purpose, identify the research variables, the population and the setting.