III-35: Using an Internet Protocol to Gather Stories for Qualitative Research with Individuals Living Through Health Challenges

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Abstract:
Introduction: Over 4 million Americans access the internet; however there are limited reports in the literature on use of the internet to gather data for research. The use of Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) specifically Skype Technology can reach those in a variety of geographical regions while maintaining a presence necessary for person-to-person dialogue. The purpose of this poster is to describe: VoIP as a process for accessing participants for research, story inquiry as a method of gathering qualitative data, and a proposed study using this process and method with persons experiencing catastrophic loss from disaster.

Method(s): Skype an example of a proprietary VoIP method offers research opportunities through operational ease, cost effectiveness, and secure connection that includes real time, face-to-face communication. Skype offers the researcher the capability to gather the story without
geographical or time constraints. Liehr & Smith (2007) identify a method for story gathering using story path inquiry where the researcher begins with the present, then to the past, and into the future.

**Results:** A study is being designed to use the technology with hurricane survivors. Following IRB approval, recruitment of participants, and verification of required equipment; meetings will be scheduled to gather stories of Hurricane Katrina survivors who have been geographically displaced since the disaster. These survivors will be asked to share their retrospective accounts of their experience focusing on catastrophic loss and health challenges following the disaster.

**Discussion & Conclusions:** The use of Skype offers the opportunity to gather stories of disaster survivors and allows for variability, flexibility, and efficiency in qualitative data collection. Limitations of using Skype include unavailability of required equipment, internet support, and lack of appropriate use during and immediately following disaster. The health challenges that afflict some affected by Hurricane Katrina continue today and gathering these stories may benefit the survivors who disclose their story as well as provide an understanding of the experience of surviving loss after a disaster.

**Abstract History:**
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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