

## ESCP MASTERCLASS OF EXCELLENCE



# Designing Robust and Rigorous Qualitative Studies and Leveraging AI for Data Analytics in Clinical Pharmacy Research

*Organized by the ESCP Research Committee*

 **11 October 2026 | 09:00 – 17:30 | ANF (Associação Nacional das Farmácias) Headquarters, Rua Marechal Saldanha, 1 1649-069 Lisboa, Portugal**

## 01 BACKGROUND

In contemporary clinical pharmacy research, clinical outcomes tell only half the story. High impact research increasingly requires an understanding of the human and contextual factors that influence care, including patient beliefs, professional behaviors, organizational barriers, implementation challenges and the lived experience of healthcare delivery. However, a persistent rigor gap persists in clinical pharmacy research, where qualitative studies may prioritize convenience over methodological congruence, which refers to the logical alignment between the research question, theoretical framework, study design, sampling strategy, data collection methods and analytical approach. Without this alignment, qualitative findings may lack credibility, transferability and practical relevance.

This Masterclass supports participants in designing robust qualitative studies that are theoretically grounded, methodologically rigorous and relevant to clinical pharmacy practice. It

focuses on the foundations of qualitative excellence, including interpretive approaches, reflexivity, theoretical frameworks, purposive sampling, data saturation and trustworthiness. Attention will be given to the role of the researcher as the primary instrument in qualitative inquiry and to the importance of reflexivity and positionality when interpreting patient and professional experiences.

The Masterclass also addresses the expanding role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in qualitative data analysis. AI-assisted Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) and no-code analytical platforms offer new opportunities to support coding, theme development and pattern recognition across large qualitative datasets. However, these tools must be used transparently, ethically and critically, ensuring that clinical meaning, contextual interpretation and researcher judgement are central.

Participants will learn how to design qualitative studies, develop theoretically grounded interview guides, apply strategies to enhance trustworthiness, use AI-supported tools for thematic analysis, and critically appraise qualitative and AI-augmented methodologies for publication in high-quality journals.

The aim of this Masterclass is to guide participants through the design of theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous qualitative studies, while demonstrating how AI-assisted analytical tools can be used responsibly to support the interpretation of large-scale qualitative datasets in clinical pharmacy research.

## 02 LEARNING OUTCOMES

### **Design Rigour**

Ensuring methodological congruence and theoretical grounding for highly credible findings.

### **AI Integration**

Leveraging no-code AI tools for coding and theme recognition across large datasets.

### **High Publication**

Critically appraising methodologies to meet top-tier international journal standards.

By the end of this Masterclass, participants will be able to:

1. Develop qualitative research questions that are aligned with clinical pharmacy practice problems and appropriate theoretical frameworks.
2. Translate behavioral theories, models and frameworks into robust qualitative protocols, interview guides and data collection strategies.
3. Design a qualitative rigor plan, including purposive sampling, key informant selection, reflexivity, data saturation and strategies to enhance trustworthiness.

4. Apply no-code AI tools to support rapid thematic analysis of qualitative transcript datasets while maintaining clinical context and interpretive depth.
5. Compare human and AI-assisted coding outputs and integrate them into a transparent, defensible analytical process.
6. Critically appraise qualitative studies using appropriate reporting standards and assess the transparency of AI-augmented qualitative methods.

## 03 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

This Masterclass follows a 'lifecycle of inquiry' model, moving from conceptual design to data generation, analysis and final quality appraisal. The morning sessions focus on the foundations of rigorous qualitative research. Participants will explore methodological congruence, theoretical alignment, purposive sampling, key informants, data saturation, trustworthiness and high-quality interviewing. Interactive group work will support participants in transforming clinical pharmacy practice gaps into focused qualitative research questions and theoretically grounded interview guides. The afternoon sessions focus on AI-assisted qualitative analysis. Participants will engage in an AI-supported data sprint, using no-code tools to analyze transcript datasets in real time. The session will compare human and AI-assisted coding, explore ethical and methodological risks, and consider how to report AI-supported analysis transparently. The Masterclass concludes with a hybrid critical appraisal exercise, where participants evaluate qualitative rigor and AI transparency from the perspective of a journal editor or peer reviewer.

High-quality clinical pharmacy research begins with a design that ensures logical alignment between the clinical question, theoretical framework and methods. Developing impactful qualitative research requires more than a good idea; it requires carefully designed instruments that capture patient and professional perspectives without simply confirming existing assumptions. This Masterclass provides a practical and interactive introduction to the full qualitative research lifecycle. Participants will move from research question development to interview guide design, data collection, thematic analysis, AI-supported coding and critical appraisal. Particular attention will be given to reflexivity and researcher positionality, recognizing how researchers influence data generation, interpretation and meaning construction. The Masterclass is especially relevant for researchers seeking to understand barriers and facilitators to clinical pharmacy service implementation, optimize patient-centered care, and strengthen the quality and publishability of qualitative pharmacy practice research.

Participants will have the opportunity to:

- Master the rigor roadmap: use purposive sampling, reflexivity, data saturation and trustworthiness strategies to strengthen qualitative study design.
- Gain hands-on AI experience: apply no-code AI tools to support real-time thematic analysis and comparison of transcript datasets.
- Strengthen publication readiness: learn how to report qualitative and AI-assisted methods transparently for peer-reviewed clinical pharmacy journals.
- The Masterclass is designed for clinical pharmacy researchers, postgraduate students, academics, practitioners and research supervisors, regardless of prior experience with qualitative methods

## 04 DETAILED PROGRAMME

Time	Session Topic & Core Content
09.00-09.20	Introduction of participants and moderators
09.20-10.00	Foundations of Qualitative Excellence
10.00-10.40	Strategic Integration of Frameworks and Theories throughout the Qualitative Research Lifecycle
10.40-11.15	Group Work #1: From Clinical Practice Gaps to Research Questions and Theoretically Grounded Interview Guides guide
11.15-11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.30-12.10	Sampling, Key Informants, Data Saturation, and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research
12.10-12.50	Data Collection: In-Depth Interviewing and Observation: Role-Play Exercise
13.00-14.00	<i>Lunch</i>
14.00-14.40	AI-Enhanced CAQDAS and Automated Qualitative Analysis
14.40-15.10	Comparing human vs. AI-assisted coding; Ethical Integrity and Methodological Transparency
15.10-16.00	Group Work #2: Guided AI-Assisted Rapid Thematic Analysis of Transcript Datasets

<b>16.00-16.15</b>	<i>Coffee break</i>
<b>16.15-16.30</b>	Critical Appraisal of Qualitative Rigour and AI-Augmented Methodology
<b>16.30-17.00</b>	Group Work #3: The Hybrid Critique: Preparing Feedback for an Editor
<b>17.00-17.30</b>	Summary, Roadmap Feedback and Opportunities for Research Collaboration

*\* Participants are requested to bring their laptop with them to the Masterclass*

## 05 MODERATORS

### Lead Moderator:

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abdikarim Abdi** is an Associate Professor of Clinical Pharmacy at Yeditepe University in Istanbul, Turkey. A Fellow of FIP and a member of the ESCP Research Committee, he currently serves as an elected Executive Committee member and Treasurer of the FIP Academic Section. Dr. Abdi has been instrumental in clinical pharmacy and pharmaceutical care education in both North Cyprus and Turkey, notably playing a leading role in establishing hospital-based pharmaceutical care centers that bridge academia and practice. He is certified in Digital Health in Pharmacy Education (Advanced level). His research focuses on rational drug use in hospitals, the implementation and evaluation of clinical pharmacy services, and pharmacy education.

### Co-Moderators:

**Dr. Antonella Tonna** is currently a Lecturer in Clinical Pharmacy at Robert Gordon University, Scotland, UK. She is involved in teaching both undergraduate and postgraduate pharmacy students. She has conducted exploratory research around pharmacist prescribing in secondary care in hospitals in Scotland. She also has a special interest in use of qualitative methods as a way of exploring individual's views and perceptions in areas where there is limited evidence. This also involves an exploration of behaviours underpinned by theories such as the Theoretical Domains Framework. Dr Tonna also has an interest in exploring patient and carer involvement in curriculum delivery for undergraduate pharmacy students.

**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mara Pereira Guerreiro** is an Associate Professor and Leader of the Digital Health & Education Research Group at the Egas Moniz Center for Interdisciplinary Research, she focuses on bridging impactful research with innovative education. In her research role, she successfully secures funding and manages national and international projects (such as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+) aimed at transforming care pathways and educational practices, backed by an extensive record of dozens of scientific publications and book chapters. Complementing her research, she brings approximately 4,000 hours of teaching experience, utilizing digitally

enabled active learning methods like project-based learning and simulations for diverse student groups, while having supervised about 40 undergraduate and postgraduate students toward academic achievement.

**Assoc. Prof. Prof. Betül Okuyan** is an Associate Professor in Clinical Pharmacy Department at Faculty of Pharmacy at Marmara University, Istanbul, Türkiye. She is Chair of the ESCP Research Committee, and she is a member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy. Her research interests focus on development and evaluation of clinical pharmacy services and pharmacy education, and medication adherence and medication literacy.

## 06 REGISTRATION

### 30 PARTICIPANTS

Maximum capacity. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees are exempt from VAT

### REGISTRATION FEES

- ESCP Members: € 120
- Non-Members: € 150

### Secure your place in time

**Registration link:** <https://escpweb.org/product/escp-masterclass-almada-designing-robust-and-rigorous-qualitative-studies-and-leveraging-ai-for-data-analytics-in-clinical-pharmacy-research/>

