

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, 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	AI Integration	High Publication
Ensuring methodological congruence and theoretical grounding for highly credible findings.	Leveraging no-code AI tools for coding and theme recognition across large datasets.	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

16.00-16.15	<i>Coffee break</i>
16.15-16.30	Critical Appraisal of Qualitative Rigour and AI-Augmented Methodology
16.30-17.00	Group Work #3: The Hybrid Critique: Preparing Feedback for an Editor
17.00-17.30	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, Associate Professor in the School of Pharmacy, Applied Sciences and Public Health at Robert Gordon University, Scotland, UK. Tonna's research focuses on clinical pharmacy practice, pharmacy education, and optimizing patient care pathways using qualitative methods underpinned by theories as a way of exploring individual's views and perceptions in areas where there is limited evidence. She has extensive experience in facilitating workshops at numerous international conferences both to practicing pharmacists and students having facilitated ~22 educational events. She is a member of the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy, a member of the Research Committee of the European Society of Clinical Pharmacy (ESCP), and current chair of the UK National Antimicrobial Stewardship Pharmacy Education Group (NAPEG).

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.

Prof. Betül Okuyan is a 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/>

