**Challenges of conducting a research study in the time of COVID-19: adaption of qualitative research methods in a low and middle income country setting**

Andrea M McGrattan1, Emma McLellan1, Devi Mohan2,3, Mario Siervo4, Louise Robinson1, Susan Moloney1

1Population Health Sciences Institute, Newcastle University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 5PL, UK.

2 Global Public Health. Jeffrey Cheah School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Monash University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia.

3 South East Asia Community Observatory (SEACO) Study, Monash University Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

4 School of Life Sciences, The University of Nottingham Medical School, Nottingham, United Kingdom.

The COVID-19 global pandemic has presented many unprecedented challenges. Conducting research in low and middle income countries (LMICs) comes with its own challenges, but the outbreak of COVID-19 has greatly impacted how studies are implemented in this setting, particularly with regards to data collection procedures. The Global Health Research Group on Dementia Prevention and Enhanced Care (DePEC) conducts mixed-method research into prevention and diagnostic strategies, and post-diagnostic dementia care in LMICs of Malaysia, India and Tanzania. Two of the five DePEC workstreams include a mixed-method, feasibility trial of a dietary intervention in Malaysia, and a qualitative interview study involving care providers and facilitators in each of our three partner LMICs. These work streams have made methodological adaptions to how data is collected as a result of COVID-19. Since the impact of COVID-19 on partner LMICs and the movement control measures taken by each has varied, tailored adaptations were necessary. This paper will present the qualitative data collection challenges experienced within one LMIC setting during the pandemic, particularly during a country wide lock-down with movement restrictions, and discuss the adaptions that have been implemented to overcome these barriers. Adaptions include the use of virtual and online methods for qualitative data collection and to deliver training to research staff, and changes in study methodology, moving from quantitative questionnaires to qualitative telephone interviews. Our experience will be useful for researchers in a similar situation, and will provide important considerations for the delivery and implementation of qualitative research studies going forward.

(max 250 words)

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