



Levels of reduction in van Manen's phenomenological hermeneutic method: an empirical example.

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Abstract: To describe reduction as a method using van Manen's phenomenological hermeneutic research approach. Reduction involves several levels that can be distinguished for their methodological usefulness. Researchers can use reduction in different ways and dimensions for their methodological needs. A study of Finnish multiple-birth families in which open interviews (n=38) were conducted with public health nurses, family care workers and parents of twins. A systematic literature and knowledge review showed there were no articles on multiple-birth families that used van Manen's method. Discussion The phenomena of the 'lifeworlds' of multiple-birth families consist of three core essential themes as told by parents: 'a state of constant vigilance', 'ensuring that they can continue to cope' and 'opportunities to share with other people'. Reduction provides the opportunity to carry out in-depth phenomenological hermeneutic research and understand people's lives. It helps to keep research stages separate but also enables a consolidated view. Social care and healthcare professionals have to hear parents' voices better to comprehensively understand their situation; they need further tools and training to be able to empower parents of twins. This paper adds an empirical example to the discussion of phenomenology, hermeneutic study and reduction as a method. It opens up reduction for researchers to exploit.

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