Research methods: Time to get excited!

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Some of us love to think about research methods, some get quite heated about them, and some feel ambivalent about them and struggle through research sections of scientific papers or grant applications. Some readers of the *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* have extensive formal research training, while others have informal training and learned by trial and error. Some of us never opened a research methods book after our training, while others may be constantly enrolling themselves in research webinars or on courses to stay updated with the newest insights. For all of us, there is good news: we now have a ‘methods corner’ in the Journal.

Science is constantly in transition and this has consequences for the methods that we apply and challenges we face in our research studies. The *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge in the field of cardiovascular care and the promotion of evidence-based clinical practice. This means that we publish articles with a diverse range of research methods, such as surveys¹, qualitative studies², pilot studies³, or randomized controlled trials⁴. These are just a few examples of the approaches needed to address the variety of research questions posed in cardiovascular clinical practice.

In the position statement on research in cardiovascular care that was published seven years ago by the Council on Cardiovascular Nursing and Allied Professionals (CCNAP), knowledge gaps in research related to cardiovascular patient care were identified, upcoming challenges explored and recommendations for future research given.⁵ With the recent transition of CCNAP to the Cardiovascular Nursing and Allied Professions (ACNAP)⁶ a discussion arose about the need for a new position statement about research in cardiovascular care. It was generally agreed that the main conclusions from the position statement still hold and the proposed research agenda remains relevant. However, while reviewing the position statement, our eye was caught by the statement that ‘alternative trial designs can be considered’ and ‘a more sophisticated and balanced approach to appropriate research methods is needed’. Yet, when critically looking at our studies, researchers in cardiovascular care still tend to use traditional methods. In addition to the need to identify appropriate designs there are several issues that researchers in the area of cardiovascular patient care find challenging, such as how to deal with non-response and how to analyse data from patients and partners.

We believe, therefore, that it is timely to launch the ‘Methods Corner’ in the Journal. In the current issue you will find our second article in the ‘Methods Corner’. Every issue of the *European Journal of Cardiovascular Nursing* will tackle a research issue that is relevant to our field. The editors of this series are Professor Philip Moons and Professor Christopher Lee, both experienced researchers and teachers.

In the first issue of the Methods Corner Professor Moons explained how propensity weighting can be used in non-randomised studies. ⁷

In the current issue Professor Lee gives an excellent introduction to dyad research, which is relevant for many of our researchers who collect data from patients and their caregivers.(add ref)

Maybe you as a reader have questions that have arisen during your research or maybe you have wondered about research methods that could also be of interest to others. You are welcome to send ideas for topics to present in the Methods Corner to the section editors (Philip.Moons@kuleuven.be or leeddo@bc.edu).

More information about the Methods Corner you can be found in the section HeartBeat of the Journal ([link here](#))

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