Qualitative Research in Latin America: Critical Perspectives in Health

Francisco J. Mercado-Martínez

Francisco J. Mercado-Martínez, PhD, Professor, Universidad de Guadalajara, Guadajara, Mexico.

Abstract:
Qualitative research is a field of knowledge and practices broadly generalized in Latin American health sector. Few studies, however, have focused on the evaluation of such literature, or on their theoretical or operational bases. The aim of this article is to examine the approaches of regional critical health movements on qualitative inquiry.

Three critical health movements were identified in Latin America linked to qualitative research: social medicine, popular or grass roots movements and socio-cultural studies. A characterization of such movements is made, links established with qualitative research are described, examples of empirical studies are presented and, finally, criticisms to such movements are mentioned.

Key words: qualitative health research, critical perspectives, Latin America.

This article is based on a presentation at the Second Advances in Qualitative Methodology Conference, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, February 23-25, 2001.