

Prompt Questions

1. Did the study address a clearly focused research question?

Was there a clear statement of the aims of this study? Can you put the purpose of this study into your own words?

2. What was the research design?

Qualitative? Quantitative? Mixed-methods?

One group in the study (within-group)? Two groups (between group)?

People assessed at one time point (cross-sectional)? People assessed before and after intervention (pre-post/repeated measures)? Multiple time points over a long time (longitudinal)?

3. Were the criteria for inclusion in the sample clearly defined?

Have the researchers told us about the inclusion and exclusion criteria that they developed prior to recruitment of the study participants? i.e. deaf, aged 3, no other diagnoses, must be using spoken language at home, must have deaf parents, etc.

4. Were the study subjects and the setting described in detail?

The children and parents involved should be described in sufficient detail so that we can determine if it is comparable to the population of children and families we see. The authors should provide a clear description of the population from which the study participants were selected or recruited, including demographics, location, and time period.

5. Were the skills assessed measured in a valid and reliable way?

Is there sufficient information on how parent-child interaction was assessed? Did they use a well-known coding system (already used in other studies)? Did they use a published rating scale? Did they create something themselves? Have they compared their method with something that already exists? Is their method of assessment appropriate for measuring the skills/concepts they are interested in? Do they give enough detail on their methods that you could repeat it? Did anyone check their results (i.e. one person assessed the parents and then another person assessed them again and their results were compared – this is called inter-rater reliability).

6. Were confounding factors identified? i.e. Were people in each group similar at the start of the study?

Confounding is when there is a difference between groups that then creates a bias in the results, i.e. two groups are compared for language skills but one group has children who are 5 years old and the other group has children who are 2 years old – age is the confounder. Other confounders between groups might be:

- *Additional needs in one group and not the other*
- *Native signers in one group and signers born to hearing parents*
- *Differences in social economic status / parental education / parental stress*
- *Differences in age of diagnosis / level of deafness*

- Differences in age of implantation / aids being provided.

7. Were strategies to deal with confounding factors stated?

Sometimes researchers use strategies to deal with the effects of confounding factors. This may be dealt within the study design or in data analysis. In the study design, they'll make sure the groups are matched for some variables, i.e. similar % of boys, similar age, similar level of deafness. Or they deal with the differences within the data by running a few extra statistical tests, namely multivariate regression analysis to try to 'control' the data for confounding factors.

8. Were the outcomes measured in a valid and reliable way?

Read the methods section of the paper. Are skills being assessed objectively, i.e. are parents filling in self-report measures or is someone external watching and observing/scoring them?

Are those involved in collecting and analysing data trained in the use of the instrument/coding? If there is more than one assessor/coder/scorer, are they all similar in terms of skill/knowledge/training? Were all groups assessed in the same way?

9. What are the results? Is there a clear statement of findings?

What outcomes were measured, and were they clearly specified? How were the results expressed? Were the results reported for each outcome in each group at each follow-up interval? Was there any missing or incomplete data? Which statistical tests were used? Were p values reported?

10. Reflection.

What is your conclusion about the paper? Would you use it to change your practice or to recommend changes to care/interventions used by your organisation? Could you implement this intervention without delay?

References:

The above prompts are based on the CASP Checklists (<https://casp-uk.net/casp-tools-checklists/>) and the Checklist for Cross-Sectional Studies, Joanna Briggs Institute (https://jbi.global/sites/default/files/2020-08/Checklist_for_Analytical_Cross_Sectional_Studies.pdf)