

'It would nearly put the life back into you' Older adults' perspectives and experiences of the Community Specialist Teams for Older People service model in Ireland.

Introduction

Ireland currently has the fastest ageing population in Western Europe¹.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified that a fundamental shift in healthcare delivery is required to meet this demographic change and recommended the provision and development of community services for older adults².

In Ireland, there has been a substantial recent investment in the Community Specialist Team for Older People (CST OP) service model³.

This approach provides timely integrated assessment and intervention for older adults in the community by a specialist multidisciplinary team.



Aim of study

The aim of this research is to explore older adults' experiences of the CST OP service model within the Irish Healthcare context.

Recruitment



References:

1) Sheehan, A. and O'Sullivan, R. (2020) Ageing and Public Health – an overview of key statistics in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Dublin: Institute of Public Health.

2) World Health Organization. 2015, World report on ageing and health. Geneva: World Health Organization. Available from: <http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/world-report-2015/en/> [Accessed 1st August 2024].

3) Health Service Executive. (2022) National Framework for the Integrated Prevention and Management of Chronic Disease in Ireland 2020-2025: Health Service Executive. Available at: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/cspd/icp/chronic-disease/documents/national-framework-integrated-care.pdf> [Accessed 31st July 2024].

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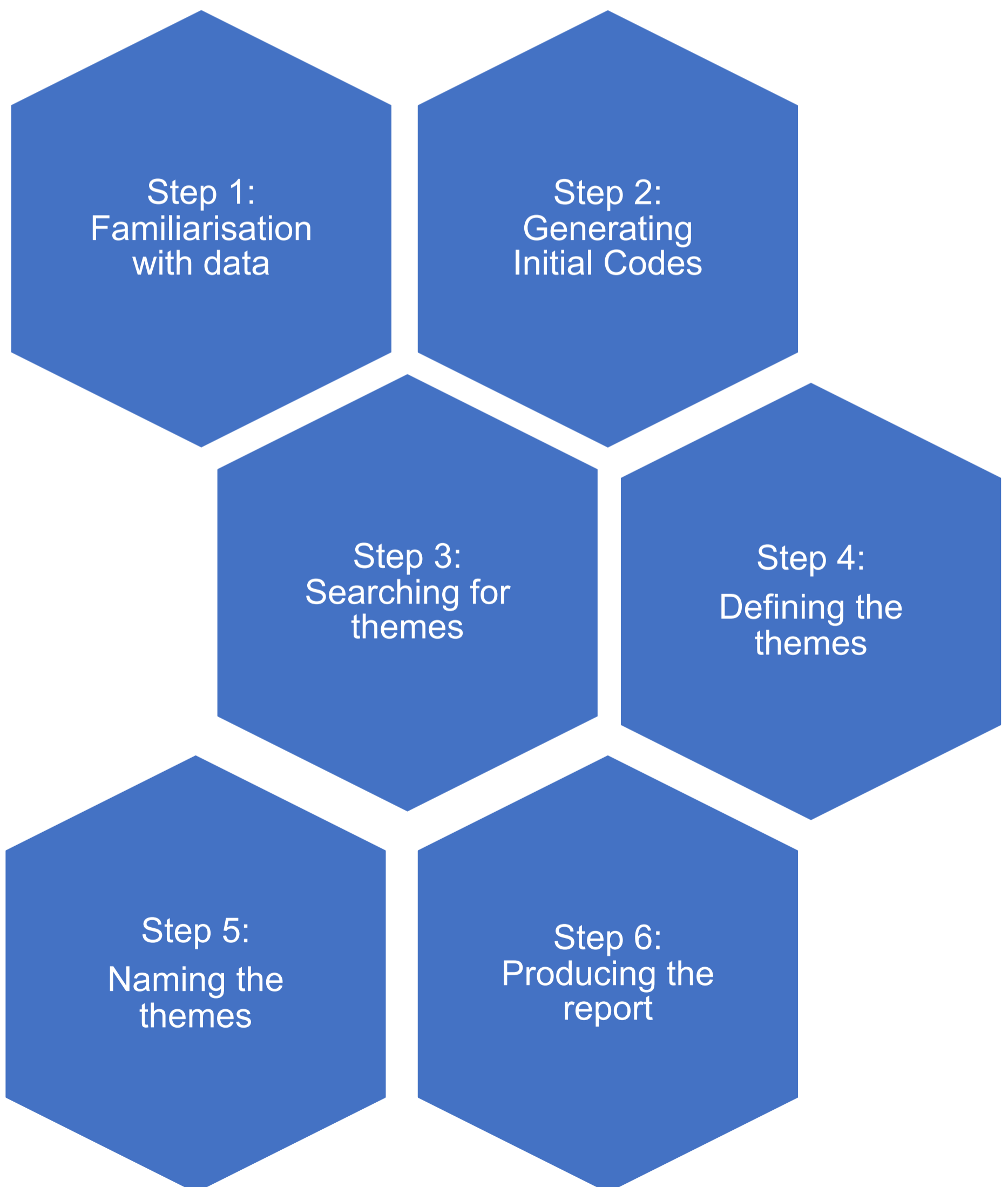
Methodology

Individual semi-structured interviews were completed with 13 older adults.

Semi-structured interview guide was developed based on current evidence and findings from previous research.

Braun and Clarke 6 step approach to Reflexive Thematic Analysis was followed for data analysis.

Six Step approach to Reflexive Thematic Analysis



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Findings: Themes

Theme 1:

Older adults valued CST OP but faced *accessibility barriers* and *lacked awareness* of the service prior to participation.

'I don't know which GP that referred me to the HUB. But I am thrilled that they did and for what reason, I don't know. I don't know why they sent me there now'

Theme 2:

CST OP team delivered *positive, coordinated, and comprehensive care*, and developed strong therapeutic relationships with older adults.

'And what I was very impressed was immediately when I told them about the hip and the fracture, they send me for a bone scan which showed I had osteoporosis'

Theme 3:

CST OP intervention enabled older adults to *better manage everyday activities and long-term conditions*, enhancing emotional wellbeing.

'Well as I said they got me back walking again properly, because I couldn't walk before, I'm alright now walking'

Conclusion

Three themes were identified:

- 1) Older adults valued CST OP intervention but, faced accessibility barriers and lacked awareness of the service prior to participation.
- 2) CST OP delivered coordinated, and comprehensive care to older adults.
- 3) CST OP Intervention enabled older adults to better manage everyday activities and long-term conditions, enhancing emotional wellbeing.

This study identified older adult's positive experiences of CST OP in Ireland.

The study reaffirms previous research findings that functional ability is an important outcome to older adults in healthcare.