Grounded Theory: Applications in Holistic Nursing Research and Practice
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Introduction and History
Grounded Theory (GT) is an inductive methodology that leads to the generation of theory from systematic research processes. GT was developed by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960s, and is a general method that can be applied in any field, including nursing. GT is most often discussed within the context of qualitative research. Other types of qualitative research include phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnography, and historical research (Zahourek, 2013).

Key Concepts
Andrews and Scott (2013) point out that the term Grounded Theory refers to the research method and the resulting theory grounded in the data. The first step in GT methodology is to identify the substantive area, or the area of interest for exploration. The second step is to collect data relevant to the substantive area. One of the features of GT is that data can be a mix of qualitative and quantitative, including interviews, observations, reflective journals, media reports, and even emails or smartphone texts. The researcher approaches the subject with an open mind and receptivity to whatever answers are found. "GT helps us to see things as they are, not as we preconceive them to be....GT orients us to seeing our behavior and the behavior of others as data" (Glaser, 2014, p. 48). A typical GT study may include in-depth interviews of varied numbers of participants, along with other data sources. A key principle of GT is that everything is data, and the researcher analyzes and then codes written data to identify the core category, which explains the main concern of the participants.

The researcher uses the constant comparative method of data analysis to compare elements or themes identified among the interviews or data sources. Another key dimension of GT is memoing. "Memos are the written records of the researcher's thinking, both conscious and preconscious realizations as the research and the researcher grows....There are no rules for writing them......Memoing is not optional...memos ensure the quality of the emerging theory" (Glaser, 2013, p. 2). Memos contain the intellectual processes of the researcher and capture the evolution of the theory itself. Memos are sorted as the researcher moves toward the writing and rewriting phases of the research methodology. The sorting stage is also when the researcher may review pertinent literature to look at more data and to compare what has emerged from the coding process.

The outcome of the GT method is the emergence of a Grounded Theory that fits the data, works to account for how participants solved their main concern, is relevant to the field, and is modifiable in further development (Giske & Artinian, 2007).

Application to Holistic Nursing
Grounded Theorists strive to understand peoples’ lives and concerns (Gelling, 2011), thus making GT relevant to holistic nursing research and practice. Both qualitative and quantitative research contribute to expanding our knowledge of human experiences and our "inner lives"; thus, a general method such as GT can be very useful in holistic nursing research.

Zahourek (2013) points out that holistic nursing research must incorporate holistic frameworks into the research process from conceptual origins through to interpretation of findings. An example of such research is Zahourek's article in 2005, "Intentionality: Evolutionary Development in Healing. A Grounded Theory Study for Holistic Nursing". The article shows how the GT methodology was employed, the sampling processes, and the development of the theory of intentionality: the matrix for healing.
Summary
In summary, Grounded Theory is a systematic research approach, which, when done well, results in a grounded theory that fits the pertinent data set and can speak to the broader human condition. GT has been embraced by a number of nurse researchers and has informed holistic nursing research and literature.

References