



# ***Innovation in Healthcare*** **A Concept Analysis**

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The theoretical complexity of  
*innovation* is a “conceptual  
cartographer’s nightmare”!

(Greenhalgh, Robert, Bate, et al., 2004, p.7)

# INTRODUCTION & OBJECTIVE

- “innovation” is en vogue
- despite common usage of term, lack of conceptual clarity exists
- articulation of meanings = consistency + direction in practice, theory, research
- this presentation describes a concept analysis of “innovation”

# METHODS

## *Review of the Literature*

- computer searches, manual library searches, citation tracking, local experts
- English and French empirical literature
  - health and management disciplines
  - 1970-2008, especially >1990
  - CINHAL, Medline, ProQuest
  - 600 articles examined, 40 articles reviewed
- books and other grey literature sources

## *Concept Analysis*

- Morse and colleagues' (1995, 1996) criteria guided concept evaluation

# RESULTS

## *A Concept Analysis...*

- Definitions
- Characteristics
- Preconditions
- Outcomes
- Boundaries

**...of innovation in healthcare**

# Definitions of Innovation

- range of meanings implied is broad
- small + recent body of healthcare literature about innovation relies on management definitions
- most defining characteristic: newness
- other defining features are:
  - applying an idea, product, or service successfully
  - involving creators + adopters
  - relating to an element of action + including change
  - resulting in a benefit
- moderate homogeneity among definitions

# Characteristics of Innovation

- 6 main categories of features: ideas, people, transactions, context, process, and outcomes (Van de Ven, Angle, & Poole, 2000)
- process of developing + implementing a new idea
- something totally new; a reinvention / redesign
- people as a crucial aspect (creators, inhibitors, managers of innovation)
- emerges through relationships + interactions between individuals within a system

# Characteristics of Innovation

- context (organizational environment) is elemental to supporting development / implementation
- is marked by changes, phases, or stages that occur over time
- is ubiquitously documented as a complex process
- is 'knowledge intensive'; transformation of knowledge into observable products or services

# Preconditions of Innovation

- contexts, circumstances, needs necessitating change
- related to:
  - 'receptive context'
  - 'absorptive capacity'
  - 'readiness for change'

# Outcomes of Innovation

- achieves something...  
successful, beneficial, useful,  
valuable, or productive
  - creation of new product / service
  - recognized change in behaviours / beliefs

# Boundaries of Innovation

- **Related concepts**
  - *invention*: the discovery of new ideas or approaches
  - *creativity*: about ideation
  - *change*: movement from one phase or state to another)
  - these concepts are either recognized as being different from, part of, or as having being confused with *innovation*

# Boundaries of Innovation

- **Case exemplars**
  - usually establishing new technologies, new services, new ways of working  
(Lansisalmi et al., 2006)
    - best practice guidelines
    - interprofessional models of care programs
    - biotechnology / pharmaceutical breakthroughs
    - systems redesigns for primary and integrated care

# Boundaries of Innovation

- **Case exemplars**
  - case exemplars in nursing:
    - the development of magnet hospitals
    - the creation of the nurse practitioner role
    - the launch of the “80/20” professional development nursing practice model

# CONCLUSION

- innovation: broad, complex, elusive, relevant to many disciplines /domains
  - a concept evaluation reveals that “innovation in healthcare” does have a moderate degree of maturity
  - gaps in knowledge related to innovation for future research:
    - how innovations emerge in health service delivery organizations
    - how “tension for change” can be produced in relation to innovation
    - how leadership influences a context of “receptivity to change” for innovation
- (Greenhalgh et al., 2004; Krause, 2004)
- while some clarity and consensus exists in the literature, there is opportunity for further conceptual development

“The beginning of wisdom  
is to call things by their  
right names.”

~ Chinese Proverb ~

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**THANK YOU!**

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