

Appendix 1: Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) Checklist^a

#	Item	Question/description	Answer	Section
Domain 1: Research team and reflexivity				
Personal Characteristics				
1	Interviewer/facilitator	Which author/s conducted the interview or focus group?	DI	Methods
2	Credentials	What were the researcher's credentials?	DI: MD, MBA* PG: MSc DK: MSc, PhD NK: MD, PhD *PhD student	Methods and authors' list
3	Occupation	What was their occupation at the time of the study?	Researchers were members of an existing international network of healthcare performance intelligence professionals (HealthPros) or involved with the secretariat work of HOPE.	Methods
4	Gender	Was the researcher male or female?	One woman Three men	Methods
5	Experience and training	What experience or training did the researcher have?	The research team included healthcare performance intelligence researchers and practitioners with previous experience of working with health data and policy, designing health system performance assessment frameworks and conducting health information system assessments in the European and global context	Methods
Relationship with participants				
6	Relationship established	Was a relationship established prior to study commencement?	Informants were previous or future participants to the HOPE Exchange Programme. Throughout the study, informants were provided with study overviews and detailed survey/interview/webinar briefs.	Methods
7	Participant knowledge of the interviewer	What did the participants know about the researcher? e.g. personal goals, reasons for doing the research.	Informants all received a written overview of the study aims and objectives in English. The reasons for conducting the research were restated at the start of all interviews and webinars.	Methods

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8	Interviewer characteristics	What characteristics were reported about the interviewer/facilitator? e.g. Bias, assumptions, reasons and interests in the research topic	At the outset of each interview, the interviewer present introduced themselves by their areas of research and affiliations.	Methods
Domain 2: study design				
Theoretical framework				
9	Methodological orientation and Theory	What methodological orientation was stated to underpin the study? e.g. grounded theory, discourse analysis, ethnography, phenomenology, content analysis	An explanatory sequential mixed-methods, involving online survey, case study interviews and webinars were employed. Data collected through the online survey were analysed using univariate statistics, and thematic analysis for the final, open-ended question. These results sequentially informed the design and focus of country case semi-structured interviews. Interview transcripts were analysed using narrative analysis. Data analysis was conducted by the first author (DI) and reviewed by co-authors (PG, NK, DK). Close engagement with relevant stakeholders, through webinars, was also used for dissemination and validation of the survey and interview results.	Methods
Participant selection				
10	Sampling	How were participants selected? e.g. purposive, convenience, consecutive, snowball	Purposive sampling based on target profile of participants working in mid-managerial positions in hospitals, which treated COVID-19 patients at the time of conducting the study, in HOPE member countries.	Methods
11	Method of approach	How were participants approached? e.g. face-to-face, telephone, mail, email	Multiple methods via email, including direct contacts and advice of local experts (national coordinators for HOPE).	Methods
12	Sample size	How many participants were in the study?	Eighty-six informants participated in the online survey. Eight participants joined the semi-structured case study interviews. Forty-five and fifty-five participants joined the February	Methods and Results

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13	Non-participation	How many people refused to participate or dropped out? Reasons?	<p>and June webinars (respectively).</p> <p>Out of 86 respondents to the online survey, 24 were not affiliated with hospitals treating COVID-19 patients at the time of the survey. This data was excluded from the analysis of survey results.</p> <p>One participant withdrew their consent after having participated in a country case semi-structured interview, due to unclear organisational policies. This data was deleted, and results were not used for this work.</p>	Methods and Results
Setting				
14	Setting of data collection	Where was the data collected? e.g. home, clinic, workplace	Through an online survey, online interviews (n=8) and webinars (n=2).	Methods
15	Presence of non-participants	Was anyone else present besides the participants and researchers	For the interviews – no. For the webinars – yes, broader HOPE community members were also invited for webinars.	Methods
16	Description of sample	What are the important characteristics of the sample? e.g. demographic data, date	Full online survey replies, included in the analysis (n=62), came from respondents working in 18 European countries. Most respondents worked in Poland (10/62; 16.1%), the Netherlands (9/62; 14.5%) and Austria (6/62; 9.7%). Respondents were mostly affiliated to larger, regional or teaching (25/62; 40.3%) and university hospitals (24/62; 38.7%). Additionally, eight informants contributed to country case studies' semi-structured interviews.	Methods and Results
Data collection				
17	Interview guide	Were questions, prompts, and guides provided by the authors? Was it pilot tested?	The online survey was developed, tested and administered in English, in a mobile phone-friendly format. Five cognitive pretesting sessions took place between 23 to 25 November 2020 and involved six testers from five countries, one of whom was a native-English speaker. Survey results sequentially	Methods

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			informed the design and focus of country case semi-structured interviews and the briefs, shared with informants prior to interviews.	
18	Repeat interviews	Were repeat interviews carried out? If yes, how many	No. However, some interview informants also participated to the other stages of the research, such as webinars and the online survey.	Methods
19	Audio/visual recording	Did the research use audio or visual recording to collect the data?	Interviews and webinars were audio recorded with the agreement of participants.	Methods
20	Field notes	Were field notes made during and/or after the interview or focus group?	All interviews were transcribed verbatim to follow. Webinar recordings were reviewed and detailed notes taken.	Methods
21	Duration	What was the duration of the interviews or focus groups?	Interviews lasted on average 30 minutes. Webinars lasted 60 and 90 minutes, respectively.	Methods
22	Data saturation	Was data saturation discussed?	Regular research team meetings were organized to discuss progress and recurrent themes.	Methods
23	Transcripts returned	Were transcripts returned to participants for comment and/or correction?	No. Transcripts were provided when requested by participants for their recordkeeping purposes.	Methods
Domain 3: analysis and findings				
Data analysis				
24	Number of data coders	How many data coders coded the data?	Data analysis was conducted by the first author (DI) and reviewed by co-authors (PG, NK, DK).	Methods
25	Description of the coding tree	Did authors provide a description of the coding tree?	No, the detailed data coding tree can be shared following a reasonable request but was not included in the paper manuscript nor its appendices.	NA
26	Derivation of themes	Were themes identified in advance or derived from the data?	Interview themes were derived from the online survey results. These results sequentially informed the design and focus of country case semi-structured interview guides.	Methods
27	Software	What software, if applicable, was used to manage the data?	An Excel tool was developed.	Methods

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28	Participant checking	Did participants provide feedback on the findings	Preliminary online survey and case study interview results were presented and discussed in subsequent webinars.	Methods
Reporting				
29	Quotations presented	Were participant quotations presented to illustrate the themes/findings? Was each quotation identified? e.g. participant number	Yes, participant quotes were used in the paper, to illustrate findings. Each quotation was assigned to a randomised and anonymised informant code (number).	Results
30	Data and findings consistent	Was there consistency between the data presented and the findings?	Findings are presented in the approach of the research questions and appropriate methodology used.	Introduction, Methods and Results
31	Clarity of major themes	Were major themes clearly presented in the findings?	Major themes have been presented in the results.	Results
32	Clarity of minor themes	Is there a description of diverse cases or discussion of minor themes?	Manuscript present both research findings on major and minor themes investigated in the study. These are also discussed in the Discussion section.	Results and Discussion

^a Tong A, Sainsbury P, Craig J. Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. *Int J Qual Health Care* 2007;19:349–57.