**Case Study One**

A researcher is conducting a narrative inquiry with fifteen nurses about their experiences working during the COVID-19 pandemic. The consent form states that interviews will be recorded through the university's videoconferencing platform and transcribed. It does not specify that the platform generates transcripts automatically. The university has approved the platform for research use, and the institutional review board has no specific guidance concerning AI-assisted qualitative research.

After the first several interviews, the researcher finds the accounts emotionally difficult to revisit. She is also teaching full time and facing a conference deadline. Before beginning sustained narrative analysis, she begins by asking a large language model to produce short summaries of each transcript so that she can remember the major events and concerns discussed by each participant. She removes names before uploading the transcripts but leaves details about hospitals, professional roles, family circumstances, and specific pandemic experiences because these seem important to understanding the narratives.

The summaries are useful. They identify recurring concerns including moral distress, exhaustion, difficult interactions with administrators, and feelings of abandonment. As additional interviews are completed, the researcher begins using the summaries to create a running document of emerging ideas. That document influences which passages she returns to in the transcripts and what she asks participants about in later interviews.

Several weeks later, while preparing a conference presentation, she returns to the recording of one interview. A nurse pauses repeatedly while describing entering a hospital room after a patient's family has said goodbye over video. The transcript contains the words but not the pacing, changes in tone, or several long silences. The AI summary absorbs the moment into a general account of pandemic exhaustion. Its coherence removes the uncertainty and emotional rupture through which the nurse narrated the experience.

The researcher then tries to locate a participant quotation included in one of the model's analytic summaries. No participant said the sentence as written. The system has combined language from two interviews into a plausible statement. The quotation sounds consistent with the data, which makes the fabrication easy to miss. The conference abstract has already been accepted, and several of those categories now organize the presentation.

**Case Study Two**

A doctoral student who was herself a first-generation college student is designing a study of first-generation college students' experiences seeking help. Although she has already begun recruiting participants, her advisor recommends piloting the interview guide before meeting with participants. She gives the interview guide to a generative AI system and asks it to identify confusing, leading, or repetitive questions. The system suggests simplifying several questions and offers replacements. The revised guide feels clearer and more conversational, so she incorporates many of the changes.

She then asks the system to simulate a participant so that she can practice interviewing. During the simulation, the model gives detailed responses about embarrassment, family expectations, financial pressures, and feeling out of place at the university. When the doctoral student asks follow-up questions, the system provides encouraging feedback and suggests additional probes. She repeats the exercise several times and becomes more confident.

Once data collection begins, the interviews go smoothly. Participants understand the questions, and the student rarely struggles to think of a follow-up. Several interviews contain themes she recognizes from the simulations, particularly reluctance to seek help, imposter feelings, and conflicts between family and university expectations.

On her seventh interview, the student researcher finds herself asking several questions about belonging and discomfort before realizing that the participant has not described either one. Instead, he explains that he avoids academic support because the available services seem to assume that students want to become more integrated into university life. He sees college primarily as something he needs to complete while maintaining commitments elsewhere.

When she reviews her interview guide, she notices that many of the AI-assisted revisions anticipate help-seeking as a question of barriers, deficits, confidence, and reluctance. A broader question from her original guide—what academic support meant to participants—has disappeared.