



Ethical Research in Children and its Major Consequences

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DESCRIPTION

There are a number of ethical problems, obstacles, and issues that arise when conducting research with children and adolescents, both expected and unexpected. It is everyone's obligation to oversee ethical research, including those who fund, approve, and conduct it as well as policymakers and practitioners who use the research's findings in their work. Therefore, there is a need for critical engagement by all interested parties around some fundamental but crucial problems that are essentially ethical in character and necessitate close attention long before the research makes its way to any type of ethics review body. Such inquiries include, "Is this research necessary?" and "Whom and how will the research benefit?" These types of inquiries, such as "Is children's participation in the research required or can the knowledge be gained in other ways?" and "What would be the likely [ethical] repercussions of not engaging children," become even more crucial when the research involves children and young people.

Children's involvement in research

These and many other issues that come up when funding, regulating, or conducting research involving children have been addressed by the Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) project. The print and web-based resources created through the ERIC project are the result of in-depth research and international consultation, and they offer a helpful framework for approaching these and numerous other issues that are crucial to ensuring that research involving children can legitimately be deemed "ethical." The ERIC project and resources are introduced to readers of Family Matters in this article, which also encourages further participation, discussion, and experience-sharing in the ongoing international movement toward safe, respectful research that prioritises children's wellbeing, dignity, and rights in all methodological, social, and cultural contexts.

Children and young people are now being included in more research and evaluation projects than ever before, in a variety of settings such families, schools, workplaces, and out-of-home care. In the past, studies tended to focus on children's lives from the viewpoints of their parents or other important adults. Changes in how children and childhood are perceived, which have been greatly supported by research on children's rights and the creation of the interdisciplinary area of childhood studies, are largely responsible for the greater direct involvement of children and young people. Children's rights to protection from harm, care, and resources have received significant international attention thanks in large part to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Childhood studies have undergone a paradigm shift that has seen the emphasis placed more heavily on reaching out to and hearing the opinions of children. Previously, children and childhood were constructed in terms of fragility, dependency, and immaturity. As a result, children and young people are much more frequently involved in research using a variety of well-established research techniques and strategies to actively involve them.

Ethical considerations

Along with children's greater involvement in research, ethical concerns are becoming more prominent as researchers share their own experiences in a variety of contexts. As a result, there is currently a sizeable amount of literature concentrating on a variety of ethically contentious subjects in various study contexts. Despite this, researchers and other stakeholders still express feelings of isolation and a lack of knowledge of or access to resources that support, direct, and inform ethical research practise, leaving them dependent on their own ethical principles, past experiences, and institutional ethics requirements. As a result, there is a wide range in research practise quality. Given this context, some researchers say they have a sense of inadequacy or failure when faced with moral difficulties.

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Received: 28-Nov-2022, Manuscript No. JCRB-22-19409; **Editor assigned:** 02-Dec-2022, Pre QC No. JCRB-22-19409 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 16-Dec-2022, QC No JCRB-22-19409; **Revised:** 23-Dec-2022, Manuscript No. JCRB-22-19409 (R); **Published:** 30-Dec-2022, DOI: 10.35248/2155-9627.22.13.446.

Citation: Li J (2022) Ethical Research in Children and its Major Consequences. J Clin Res Bioeth. 13:446.

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