Reviewer's report

Title: Understanding and Retention of informed consent process among Parents in a Rural Northern Ghana

Version: 4  Date: 3 March 2008

Reviewer: Christine Grady

Reviewer's report:

Comments on Revisions to Understanding and Retention of the informed consent process among parents in rural Northern Ghana.

The revisions have strengthened the paper. The authors have added more context and limitations within which to understand their findings. The additional tables are very helpful.

1. Is the question posed by the authors well defined? Pretty well
2. Are the methods appropriate and well described? yes
3. Are the data sound? yes
4. Are the discussion and conclusions well balanced and adequately supported by the data? Pretty much
6. Are limitations of the work clearly stated? yes
9. Is the writing acceptable? Could use some additional editing, otherwise OK

The paper could still use some serious editing. There are sentences that need to be restructured or divided for clarity. An example is the 1rst sentence of the last par on page 14. It currently says: â##This study evaluated comprehension and retention of the informed consent process in northern Ghana, an area where significant research interventions with ethical implications continue to be carried out by using an informed consent process in an earlier cohort study involving children and their parents.â## Perhaps better would be something like: â## This study evaluated comprehension and retention of study information by a cohort of parents who had enrolled their children in a malaria study in northern Ghana. A significant amount of research that presents ethical challenges, including informed consent, has been conducted in this area of Ghana.â##

There are some sentences that I do not understand. For example, on page 4 in the introduction, I do not know what the authors mean in this sentence: â##This is because some potential participantsâ## perspectives on research are usually embedded in ideas that are linked to wider dilemmas and hence their participation in research may initially involve a perceived balance of benefits and risks.â## Another example is on page 17, mid par. â##Many at times, understanding is implied rather than verbally explicitâ##

And there are some sentences that I disagree with. For example on page 13 in
Indeed, informed consent exist only when there is full disclosure of all known or relevant information to potential participants in an all inclusive manner such that they comprehend. Informed consent rarely aims to include full disclosure of all known information, and rather aims to include disclosure of information that is relevant to a potential participants decision making, including that there is uncertainty in research. FULL disclosure of ALL KNOWN information might be volumes. Also, what does an all inclusive manner mean here?

Minor comments:

p. 10- check the numbers for married couples.

p.12 under correlation of characteristics- In all, younger parents had a consistent understanding do you mean more consistent?,

Figure 1 needs a title

**What next?:** Accept after minor essential revisions

**Level of interest:** An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests