Reviewer’s report

Title: Familiar ethical issues amplified: How members of research ethics committees describe ethical distinctions between disaster and non-disaster research

Version: 0 Date: 15 Mar 2017

Reviewer: Roger Strand

Reviewer’s report:

This is a well-organized and well-written paper that delivers what it offers: The results of a small qualitative study of REC members who have assessed protocols of disaster research.

Neither the results nor the few implications that cannot be drawn from them are particularly sensational or surprising. Also, the authors themselves point out that this study should not and cannot be used to assess or change guidelines. Rather, it is a piece of documentation of matters of fact that most of us might have expected anyway.

This is of course no reason against accepting or publishing the study. Ideally, one could have hoped for a deeper analysis, perhaps with ambitions to describe and explain REC assessment of disaster research protocols. That would have been a much more ambitious study, in which one could not rely merely on the recollections of a dozen REC members. However, that happens not to be study that was undertaken; and the actual study merits publication.

I have no particular requirements or recommendations for revision (other than that I would like to see the numbers when the authors refer on p. 8 line 23 that interviews "in general" were done by phone). The manuscript is a bit wordy for the relatively unsurprising content, so I would welcome any revision that would make it more concise.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Unable to assess

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes
Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

Not relevant to this manuscript

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Acceptable

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