Reviewer’s report

Title: The Picture Talk Project: Aboriginal Community Input on Consent for Research

Version: 0 Date: 06 Sep 2018

Reviewer: Johannes Van Delden

Reviewer's report:

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Please overwrite this text when adding your comments to the authors.

This is an interesting article reporting on community input on consent for research, more specifically on research with indigenous communities. It is almost entirely of an empirical nature, but of course reporting on ethically relevant empirical data.

Introduction

1. I understand that the work presented here is part of a bigger project and that only the data from the focus groups is reported. I also understand that this creates a somewhat complicated introduction, but I think the current version misses a number of essentials. What is the research question? Is this the question in line 10? What have you found in your own systematic review that would help to cover this question at least to some extent? All references to earlier work on this (or a similar) question seems to be absent. What additional information do we derive from your study that is not already covered somewhere. There are lots of reports about obtaining consent in LMICs or underserved populations. You give ref 7-35, but what do you aim to add?

2. I also miss the ethical contextualisation. This empirical data is relevant for an ethical debate, which would justify publishing in an ethics journal. Please indicate where you think your data might be helpful for this debate.

3. Some information in the introduction belongs to methods, eg the last sentence.

Methods

4. I commend you for the complete and ethically sensitive description of the methods
Results

5. You seem to think that you need to illustrate (or prove?) each statement you make with a or multiple quote(s), remaining rather factual. That is one way of reporting qualitative research, but not the only way and not the most rich way. I think you are basically interpreting your material and therefore I think it would also be legitimate to report on findings that are less visible in quotes but would be apparent to someone in your team, who heard and read all the material. If you would allow yourself to report on such interpretations what other insights could you share?

6. The insertion of a lot of quotes makes it sometimes difficult to keep in touch with the main line of the text. You may disagree here, but I would lean less on the quotes and elaborate your statements a bit more.

Conclusion

7. Here the findings are adequately discussed in light of the literature. One of the implications mentioned (line 822) is that truly informed consent is not always possible because of the power differential. Please elaborate. What definition of informed consent is used here? I think this power differential is more often than not present when consent is obtained in health care. You seem to suggest that only when participants are in full control, truly informed consent can be possible. I disagree. Could you please explain to an ethics audience why you put the bar so uncommonly high for truly informed consent?

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.

No

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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