



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE COLLECTION ANALYSIS & PUBLICATION OF CHILD MALTREATMENT DATA

Carrie Smith
Instructor King's University College,
Western University Canada
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Today's Overview

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- Introduction & Objective

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- Key Informant Interview Results

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- Recommendations

Introduction

- The importance of the collection of child maltreatment data from children and caregivers
- Ethical Considerations:
 - Protection of children from harm
 - Informed consent
 - Privacy and confidentiality
 - Compensation for research participants

Objective & Utilities

To develop an online document which sets out the key ethical issues requiring consideration when collecting, analysing and publishing child protection data.

- Practical support to researchers
- Opportunity for dialogue
- International networking
- Resources for researchers
 - E.g. Institutional Review Board processes
 - E.g. Benefits, risks and challenges to expect

Methods

- Literature Review
- Case Examples
- Key Informant Interviews



**KEY INFORMANT
INTERVIEWS: RESULTS**

Most Important Ethical Considerations

- Safety and Distress
- Services and Support
- Suspecting Maltreatment & Receiving Disclosures
- Preparation & Planning
- Informed Consent & Assent
 - From Children
 - From Caregivers
- Data collection, analysis and storage
- Cultural Context

Safety, Distress & Disclosures

- Preventing further harm
 - Strategies: maintaining confidentiality, collecting data at schools, using technology
- Preventing and managing distress
 - Strategies: provided clear information about what to expect, options for skipping questions, provided services
- Managing disclosures
 - Strategies vary

Potential Risks

Some people do what they can to forget those issues...(Asking children about maltreatment) can disturb the psychological balance they have found

For those children who are being abused (this research) could lead to further harm. For example, being prevented from going to school or being punished afterwards

Potential Benefits

I think an obvious benefit is listening to what children say, because adults have defined what matters.

There is no other way we have of getting that type of information, of understanding the extent of the distribution and determinants of maltreatment. Because, official reports are the tip of the iceberg... This can provide information that can help us develop interventions that can prevent maltreatment.

Potential Benefits

There is this perception that there is a major risk associated with conducting this type of work. And people underestimate the potential benefits and don't look at – what's the risk of not having evidence based information about the extent of the problem of child maltreatment? Or, what's the risk of not having reliable and valid measures to be able to capture the effectiveness of an intervention?

Informed Consent & Assent: Children and Caregivers

- No consensus on this issue
- Recommendation: developmental stage of the child should be used to determine if they can consent
- Options for parents: consent, passive consent, no consent
- More research is needed

Data Collection & Analysis

- Training of researchers and research assistants
- Clarity of questions
- Misinterpretations

Cultural Context

When research is done in different languages, you have to be extra careful using tools in different cultural contexts and countries. Sometimes, straight translation won't work.

Recommendations

- Ensure supports are available to participants
- Use clear language and pilot test
- Provide training for collecting data
- Prioritize studies in low and middle-income countries
- Develop an internationally applicable online research training tool regarding research ethics

Recommendations

- Develop a resource of ethics reports and protocols
- Continue to conduct empirical studies regarding the impact of child maltreatment studies
- Compare levels of comfort of children and youth with other sensitive issues (e.g., suicide, substance use)

Recommendations

- Prioritize studies for younger children
- Prioritize longitudinal studies
- Develop ongoing forums for discussion

Resources

- CP MERG (2012). *Ethical principles, dilemmas and risks in collecting data on violence against children: A review of available literature*, Statistics and Monitoring Section/Division of Policy and Strategy, UNICEF, New York.
- Powell, M.A., Fitzgerald, R.M., Taylor, N. & Graham, A. (2012). International literature review: Ethical issues in undertaking research with children and young people. Childwatch International Research Network, Southern Cross University, Centre for Children and Young People, Lismore NSW and University of Otago, Centre for Research on Children and Families, Dunedin, NZ.



THANK YOU

Contact Information:
csmit486@uwo.ca