

Title: Research in a War Zone

Author: Emily Anderson (based on a case in Kimberly Hoagwood, Peter S. Jensen, and Celia B. Fisher, *Ethical Issues in Mental Health Research with Children and Adolescents*, Lawrence Erlbaum, 1996)

Description: In a study investigating exposure to violence and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in children in Palestine, researchers consider how best to obtain informed consent from child participants and parents who are vulnerable due to trauma and suspicious of strangers.

Headings: Special populations and cultural competence; International research; Privacy and Confidentiality; Other privacy and confidentiality issues; Waiver of written consent form; Voluntariness and Undue Influence in Recruitment; Deference to authority

Case Type: Decision making

Research in a War Zone

Researchers from the United States want to examine adjustment processes of children in instances of chronic danger. A study is proposed to interview Palestinian children living on the West Bank during the Palestinian Uprising (*Intifada*) to understand the effects of political violence. However, in their homeland, spies sometimes posed as researchers and journalists to gather information, resulting in house raids and imprisonment. Because of this, potential participants and their families are naturally suspicious of researchers. This creates logistical and ethical issues for recruitment and informed consent.

What would you recommend to the researchers?

See Hoagwood et al. (1996) for a discussion of how this case was addressed by the researchers.