

Title: Using Old Data to Explore New Research Questions

Author: Emily E. 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: Investigators propose to use existing videotapes from a study on parent-child interactions for further research purposes. IRB members consider what to do about participant informed consent.

Headings: Privacy and Confidentiality; Authorization of data usage; Observational

Case Type: Decision making

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You are a member of your university's institutional review board (IRB). Several investigators conducted a longitudinal study comparing parent-child interactions in families with children with chronic medical problems and those with healthy children. Every six months, from infancy through 8 years, children and their parents came to the laboratory, and videotaped observations of parent-child interactions were conducted. Home observations during the first year were also videotaped.

One of the original investigators is now interested in re-analyzing the tapes to investigate the development of the children's language skills over time. This is proposed to the IRB as an amendment to the previous research protocol, which ended approximately one year ago. Because it was thought that these tapes would only be used for the one study, the initial consent form did not ask parents if the tapes could be used again for future research, but they were given the option to have the original tapes destroyed. (Only one parent asked that this be done.)

The primary reviewers of the protocol recommended approval. However, another IRB member argues that the participants never agreed to additional uses of the videotapes and that the study cannot proceed. After some discussion, another member suggests that the researchers contact the participants and ask them to sign another consent form. However, the primary reviewers still contend that the protocol should be approved.

How do you vote?

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