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Assent and consent in pediatric and adolescent research: school children's perspectives

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Abstract: Background: School students' views and perceptions of informed parental consent and child assent about child participation in research in the Middle East are not known. Methods: Focus group interviews were conducted to understand high school students' perspectives toward child and adolescent assents and consents in research including the importance of, and depth of information needed in consent and assent, and perception toward written vs verbal consent and assent. Results: The majority of students agreed that it is necessary to take parental approval and that they would not participate in research if their parents refused. Furthermore, the majority of male students agreed that if the research requires only questionnaires to be completed, then child's approval is sufficient whereas measures, such as blood sugar screening required approval from both the parent and child. Females believed it is enough to provide parental consent to participate in research unless information provided is adequate, then child approval is enough. All students stressed the importance of including detailed information; however, parental consent needs to have more detailed information than child assent. Conclusion: Parts of the students' perceptions were congruent, whereas other views were not congruent with proper conduct of pediatric research. Such a situation warrants further research and actions