

SPEAKER'S PROFILE



Name: Ruth Ezeigbo

Current position: M.Sc. Research Ethics Student @ Yenepoya (deemed to be) University.

Highest Educational Attainment: Bachelor's degree



Knowledge and perception of the adult lay public regarding assent by minors in biomedical research involving human participants in Lagos, Nigeria

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Ruth Ezeigbo¹ & Dr. Ravi Vaswani²

1. MSc Research Ethics Student @ YenePOYA (deemed to be) University
2. Professor and Faculty @ Centre for Ethics, YenePOYA (deemed to be) University, Mangalore-575018 Karnataka, India.



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- ❑ The findings, analysis and conclusion are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the YU-FIC, NIH or Yenepoya (deemed to be University).
- ❑ The authors declare no conflict of interest (either financial or non-financial) in this study.



INTRODUCTION

- ❑ **Assent**; a child's oral or written agreement to participate in research.
- ❑ Children's autonomy.
- ❑ Relevancy does not necessarily lead to awareness, acceptance, or practice



OBJECTIVE

- ❑ Assess the knowledge and perceptions of the adult lay public of Lagos, Nigeria, regarding assent by minors in biomedical research involving human participants



METHODOLOGY

- ❑ Cross-sectional study
- ❑ Snowball sampling
- ❑ 339 participants contacted, 131 responded (response rate 38.6%)
- ❑ Modified Likert scale validated questionnaire



METHODOLOGY

- ❑ Informed consent
- ❑ Bloom's cut-off points for knowledge levels (good: 80-100%, moderate: 60-79%, poor: <60%).
- ❑ Sentiment analysis (perception score)

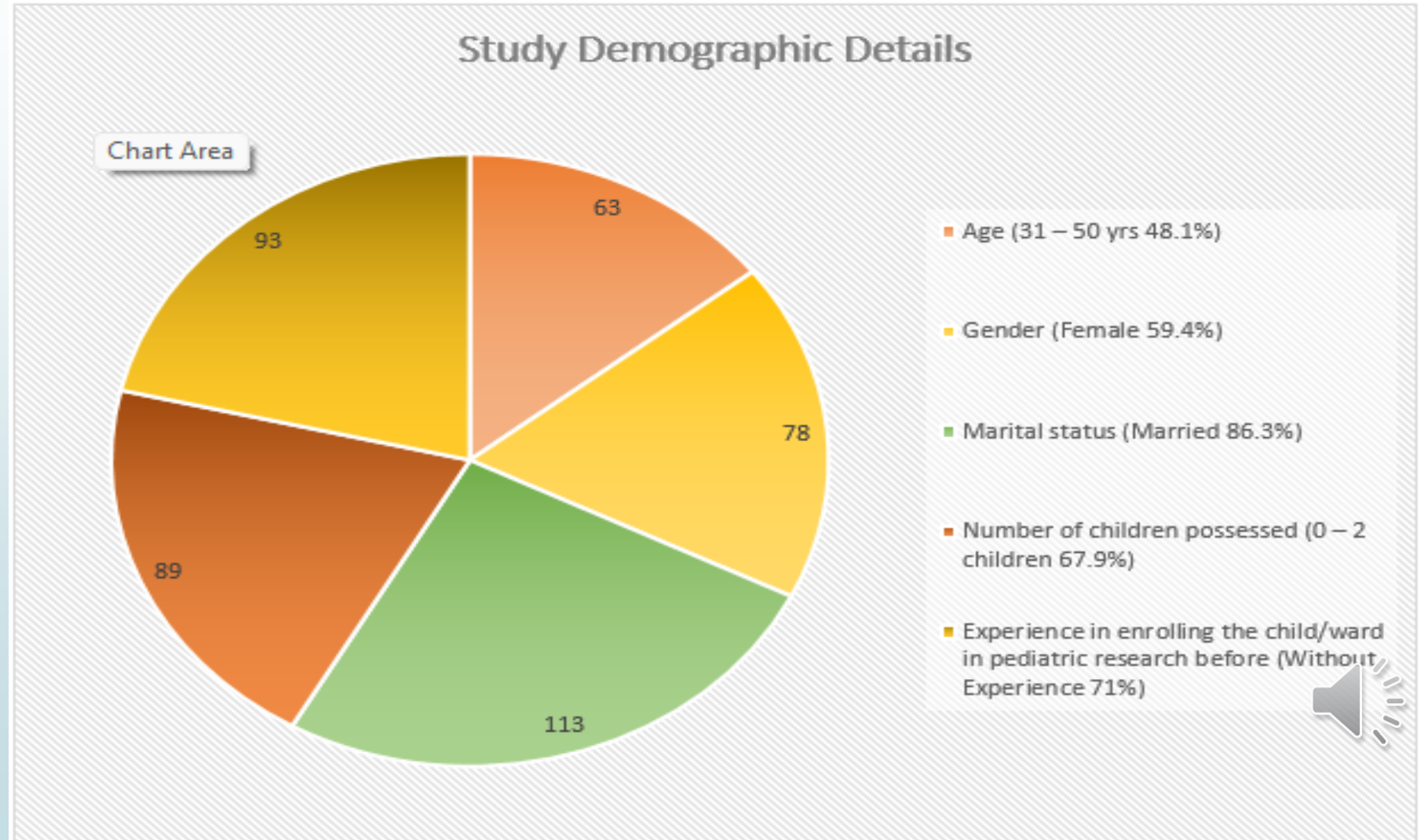
Decision for the sentiment level

Negatively directed questions = (SA-1, A-2, N-3, D-4 SD-5)

Positively directed questions = (SA-5, A-4, N-3, D-2 SD-1)



RESULTS



RESULTS

- ❑ Average Knowledge score 38.26%
- ❑ Diverse opinions on who holds the authority to allow a child to participate in research and the importance of obtaining assent from the child.
- ❑ Average Perception score of 3.67.



DISCUSSION

- ❑ With an overall knowledge score of 38.26%, significantly below Bloom's cut-off point for good knowledge (80-100%), there seems to be a substantial gap in understanding of the Nigerian adult lay population
- ❑ In Japan, Fukuda and Fukuda (2018) further highlight this gap, noting that 60% of participants either did not know the term “informed assent” or did not understand the concept
- ❑ Anderson et al (2012) emphasize the importance of engaging community members in research through certain methods in the USA



DISCUSSION

- ❑ Their findings show the need for effective targeted education and collaboration to bridge knowledge gaps and ensure ethical research practices in research involving minors.
- ❑ Mason and Urquhart (2001) emphasize the importance of a collaborative decision approach in research, which helps to promote and address social justice issues.
- ❑ Overall average sentiment score of 3.67 suggests a balanced and positive perception towards respecting both parental authority and the child's assent in biomedical research.

DISCUSSION

- ❑ Unguru (2011) highlights that most decisions in pediatric medicine involve three parties (the clinician, the child, and the parent) in England
- ❑ The present study shows that, respecting the child's decision to participate was strongly supported, showcasing the importance placed on respecting the child's autonomy and decision-making rights
- ❑ McCafferty (2024) stressed that the rights of the child acknowledge children's voices, contingent upon adults' willingness to respect and consider their views



CONCLUSION

- ❑ Substantial lack of clarity around fundamental concepts such as the definition of assent and the roles of parents and minors in the decision-making process.
- ❑ Significant discrepancy between theoretical knowledge and practical perceptions, as many respondents expressed a preference for collaborative decision-making and respecting children's choices, even with limited understanding of the assent process.



LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- ❑ The study is limited to a particular part of Lagos, Nigeria, which may not be representative of Lagos and other regions in Nigeria or countries with different cultural and regulatory contexts.
- ❑ The cultural norms and values prevalent in Lagos may influence participants' responses and perceptions in ways that may not generalize to other settings.



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