



7.0 WHAT ELSE MUST I CONSIDER?

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Over-researched groups

Certain groups in the population can be 'over-researched' – either because they are easily defined (e.g. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people), are accessible and convenient for researchers, or because they have characteristics that are distinctive and particularly interesting to researchers.

It is recommended, if carrying out research with a particular defined group, in a defined area or setting (e.g. a school, a hospital, a local authority), to try and find out what other research is being undertaken with this population. You might need to look elsewhere if you find that your potential sample is already – or has recently – been involved in other research.

This is important because over-researching is burdensome for participants – but also because you are likely to get a higher refusal rate (and thus a less representative sample), and possibly poorer quality data.¹²

Consent of children

Research involving children and young people raises particular ethical concerns about:

- Their capacity to understand what the research entails, and therefore whether their consent to participate is sufficient;
- Their possible coercion by parents, peers, researchers or others to participate in research; and
- Conflicting values and interests of parents and children.

Researchers must respect the developing capacity of children and young people to be involved in decisions about participation in research. The child or young person's particular level of maturity has implications for whether his or her consent is necessary and/or sufficient to authorise participation. For more information please see [Chapter 4.2](#) of the National Statement.¹

Children under 18 years should be asked to provide their consent to be involved in research whenever they are likely to have sufficient competence to do so. The consent of the child should be sought in addition to the consent of the parent or guardian. In such cases, it would be typical for the parent or guardian to discuss the research project with the child and for the child to indicate their consent

on the consent form. Despite the existence of a signed consent form, where a child later expresses a desire not to participate, or to withdraw their participation, this should be respected by the researcher.¹³ Research involving children under 18 years is generally classified as high risk (level 3) and ethics applications will be subject to review by a full HREC.

Working with children

To address certain types of risks for researchers and/or participants, an appropriate security clearance may be required, such as a [Working with Children Check](#).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants

The [Western Australian Aboriginal Health Ethics Committee \(WAAHEC\)](#) is one of three Aboriginal specific HRECs in Australia and is recognised and registered with the National Health and Medical Research Council, the peak ethics body in Australian Health and Ethics.

WAAHEC have a partnership with the [Kimberley Aboriginal Health Planning Forum \(KAHPF\)](#) and Kimberley Research Subcommittee. All proposed research within the Kimberley region is required to demonstrate appropriate consultation with the KAHPF before applying for ethics approval with the WAAHEC.

Research conducted with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participants must include a separate statement demonstrating how the issues in [Chapter 4.7: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#) of the National Statement will be/have been addressed. Additionally, the uniqueness of Aboriginal communities and the need for ethical oversight (e.g. Aboriginal community member's part of project advisory group) by communities should be taken into consideration.

If you would like any further information on obtaining ethics approval for conducting research and evaluation activities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations please review the links below or contact the Ethics Officer at the Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia on phone (08) 9227 1631 or email ethics@ahcwa.org.

Additional resources:

- [National Health and Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\) Values and Ethics – Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Research](#)
- [Keeping Research on track: a guide for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about health research ethics](#)

Is your research publishable?

Although you may wish to publish your research, you first need to ask yourself: is your research publishable? The following makes for publishable research:

It provides insight into an important issue – for example, by shedding light on an unsolved problem that affects a lot of people.

The insight is useful to people who make decisions, particularly long-term organisational decisions.

The insight is used to develop a framework or theory, either a new theory or advancing an existing one.

The insight stimulates new, important questions.

The methods used to explore the issue are appropriate – for example, data collection tools and analysis of data.

The methods used are applied rigorously and explain why and how the data support the conclusions.

Connections to prior work in the field or from other fields are made – a literature review is completed and serves to make the article's arguments clear.

The article tells a good story, meaning it is well written and easy to understand, the arguments are logical and not internally contradictory.¹⁴

I've received ethics approval. Now what?

Managing your project

Once you have received ethics approval you are bound to carry out the project as specified in your project proposal and ethics application form. However, during the course of conducting an approved research or evaluation project, it is not uncommon for changes to be needed, e.g. related to research team composition, recruitment of participants, research methodology, data collection and processing, or a number of other aspects of the approved project. If you want to change your approved project in any way, you will need to seek approval by submitting a 'request for amendment' to the HREC that granted ethics approval for the project.

To demonstrate satisfactory compliance with ethics requirements, the Chief Investigator/Research Supervisor is also responsible for submitting a Progress Report, at least annually. In addition, a Project Closure Report (or Completion Report) will need to be submitted at the end of the project. This should be done when all research or evaluation activities have been completed and when all contact with participants has been finalised. The due date for your reports will be notified to you by the Human Research Ethics Office.¹⁵

Communicating your research findings with the wider community

Engaging with the wider community is a vital part of disseminating research findings. There are a variety of traditional and emerging ways of sharing information with the public that now goes beyond formal publication in academic journals or books and can include:

- Non-referred publications
- Research reports
- Press releases
- Policy briefs
- Case studies
- Web pages
- Social media
- Digital repositories
- Conferences and other public exhibitions.