# LETTER

## Reporting ethical processes in the *Nursing Journal of India*

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Nursing research is a developing field to which individuals within the profession can contribute substantially based on their skills and practical experience of nursing care (1). Both reporting of informed consent and ethical approval are key aspects of published papers which indicate the researchers' knowledge of and sensitivity to ethical aspects of research (2).

Informed consent is not only required for clinical trials, but is an essential condition before enrolling each participant in all research involving human subjects whether diagnostic, therapeutic, interventional, bioequivalence, social or behavioural studies, and for all research conducted within the country or abroad (3).

A retrospective research design with quantitative research approach was used to assess the reporting of ethical approval and informed consent by all studies published in *The Nursing Journal of India* from January 2001 to December 2014. *The Nursing Journal of India* is the official publication of the Trained Nurses Association of India (TNAI), New Delhi and is the oldest journal of nursing in India. All issues of this journal were hand-searched by the authors.

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics ie, frequency counts and percentages. Results indicated that a total number of 238 research studies and 14 case studies were published in the relevant time period. Of these, informed consent was not mentioned in 182 (76.47%) research studies, and ethics approval was not mentioned in 191 (80.25%) research studies. As many as 10 case studies (71.42%) did not mention informed consent and ethics approval. All research studies and case studies involved research on human subjects. We believe these findings should not be interpreted as a lack of ethical principles being followed by the nurse researchers, or that consent, verbal or written, was not being sought while conducting the research studies, but that they fail to report it appropriately while getting their researches published.

These results are comparable with the research conducted on two Indian paediatric journals which concluded that only 30% of manuscripts published in the journals have mentioned ethics committee approval, and only 47% of prospective study reports have indicated that informed consent was obtained (4).

Researchers, authors, and editors need to be sensitive and responsible to ensure adequate reporting of the ethical and consent process followed (2). Nursing research needs to be published by all researchers, especially nurse researchers, with utmost stringency so as to disseminate evidence, share initiatives and innovations with fellow nurses, communicate the research findings and nurture the concept of "holism and evidence-based care" in nursing practices.

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