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INTRODUCTION

- Adolescent-led participatory research helps to deepen understanding of health-related behaviour.
- Use of such methods in the violence field is emergent and may have potential ethical risks.

AIM

To explore the **perceptions** of caregivers, educators and adolescents regarding the **acceptability and ethics of engaging adolescent co-researchers in a violence study** from two South African schools

METHODS

- 5 Focus Groups Discussions:** (2) adolescents aged 12-15 years in Grades 6-8), (2) educators, (1) caregivers
- Scope of Enquiry:** acceptability of enrolling Adolescent Peer Research Associates (APRAs), appropriateness of methods incl *photovoice*.

FINDINGS

Limited understanding of 'research': educators knew of standard research methods, e.g., survey interviews; adolescents = 'Google' for homework. Caregivers and adolescents saw research as an educational interventions.

Social context: high risk for interpersonal violence, substance (ab)use, peer pressure into sex, poor parenting, witnessing violence at home and at school.

APRA method = acceptable & appropriate:

From age of 12 years - sufficient maturity

"(to understand) why they are so violent. They can be able to tell you because you'll talk to them as if you are one with them... go down to their level..." (Educators, high).

APRA method as motivational:

"they will be encouraged when seeing that what they are doing it's a good thing" (Caregiver 2).

Risks: Concerns regarding APRA's capacity to carry out the research and use reimbursements 'responsibly', and their physical and psychological safety:

Reimbursements: *"to give money to children... (maybe) look at what the child lacks... rather buy them a school jersey, shoes... to give them money is not good. (Caregiver 6)*

Cellphones for photovoice: *"our learners will claim the (cellphone) is theirs, the friend will take it, or the uncle, because uncle is the bread winner, he controls everything. When you (researchers) come back, there are no pictures, or no files, the cellphones is not there." (Educator, high)*

Risk mitigation:

- Supervised APRA-led cellphone use for photovoice.
- Issued vouchers instead of cash.

CONCLUSION

- Adolescent co-research is acceptable from 12 years and perceived as motivational to adolescents
- Apart from training APRAs on informed consent, ensuring their safety requires researchers to be adaptable and to learn from research communities.