Letter to the Editor

Exploring Parental Decision-Making in Paediatric Clinical Trials: Evidence from Malaysia

Dear Editor,

I read with great interest the article by Md Ali et al., "Exploring Parental Decision-Making in Paediatric Clinical Trials: Evidence from Malaysia," published in the Hong Kong Journal of Paediatrics.[1] I would like to commend the authors for their thoughtful and timely contribution to the understanding of parental perspectives in paediatric clinical research.

This well-designed qualitative study provides rich and nuanced insights into the multifaceted factors influencing parental decision-making, including trust in healthcare professionals, children's health status, altruistic motivations, financial considerations, and physicians' professional attributes. By employing in-depth, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis, the authors successfully capture parents' lived experiences and convey their voices with clarity and authenticity. Such an approach is particularly valuable in paediatric research, where decision-making is complex and emotionally charged.

Notably, the study highlights the central role of trust and effective communication in shaping parents' willingness to allow their children to participate in clinical trials. The emphasis on clear explanations delivered in the national language and the importance of clinicians' interpersonal competence offers practical and actionable insights for healthcare professionals involved in research recruitment. These findings reinforce the notion that ethical and successful paediatric clinical trials rely not only on scientific rigor but also on strong, empathetic clinician–family relationships.

The authors should also be applauded for situating their findings within the broader Malaysian healthcare and socioeconomic context. By addressing financial considerations and access to care, the study sheds light on real-world factors that influence participation and underscores the relevance of paediatric clinical trials in improving equity and treatment opportunities for children.

Overall, this article makes a meaningful contribution to paediatric research, clinical practice, and research ethics. It provides valuable guidance for clinicians, researchers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen parental engagement and trust in paediatric clinical trials. I congratulate the authors on this important and insightful work.

Reference

1. Md Ali SM, Mat Saad Z, Mohamad Yusof NZ, Mustafa MF. Exploring Parental Decision-Making in Paediatric Clinical Trials: Evidence from Malaysia. HK J Paediatr (new series) 2026;31:18-25.

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