Ethical issues in action-oriented research in Indonesia

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Abstract

Background:

Action-oriented research is one of the most frequent research types implemented to transform community health in Indonesia. Three researchers and 11 graduate students from a developed country in East Asia conducted a fieldwork program in a remote area in South Sulawesi Province. Although the project was completed, whether or not the international standards for human subject research were applied into that study remains unclear.

Objectives:

This study aimed to examine ethical issues raised from that case, analyze constraints to
exploited by local/international researchers.

Methods:

A problem-solving approach was used in this study. It began with problem identification, evaluation of the action-oriented research goal, investigation of the constraints to the problem, and recommendation of some relevant alternatives to address the central issue.

Ethical Consideration:

The approval for conducting the action-oriented research that being investigated in this work was only obtained from the Head of local district.

Results:

Some ethical issues were found in this case. No special protection for this population, no informed consent was obtained from the participants, exposure to social and economic risks, no future benefits for the subjects, and conflict of interests. Lack of control from the local research ethics committee and lack of competence of local researchers on human subject research were considered as the constraints to the problems.

Discussion:

Creating an independent research ethics committee, providing research ethics training to the local researchers, obtaining written/video consents from underserved populations, and meeting local health needs were recommended alternatives to solve these problems.

Conclusion:

Indonesian government bodies should reform their international collaborative system on research involving human subjects. Exploitation may not occur if all participants as well
as all local and national governing bodies understand the research ethics on human subjects and apply it into their practice.

References


