Ethical considerations for research involving boys diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder

Leigh Adams Tucker & Kaymarlin Govender

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ABSTRACT

The ‘new sociology of childhood’ has activated a growing interest in children as social actors and their level of involvement in activities that affect their lives. In the field of research, debate is underway regarding the consent processes and methodological activities that support child participation. This paper highlights methodological and ethical considerations that emerged while engaging in research with young boys (aged 9–11 years old) with a formal diagnosis of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Key issues include recruitment, informed consent, and participatory activities for data production. Sociocultural theories of childhood and disability are applied to reflect on the power and privilege operating through the research process. Engaging in research that involves children with disabilities, in which discourses of risk, stigma, and protection are elevated, problematizes the researcher–researched relationship and expands considerations of what constitutes ethical practice and ‘valuable data’.