
Workflows for Complex Informed Consent Situations

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Below is guidance on how to handle complex informed consent situations. If there are any questions, please reach out to Program Manager, Israel Owoade, or Project Manager, Nafisat Lawal

Autonomy is very important when taking informed consent and it should not be compromised in any way. In Nigeria's context, where many wives defer to their husbands and elderly persons defer to their children, it does happen that sometimes when there is a need to take **any form** of decision, such wives and/or elderly persons often ask their husbands or children respectively, to take decision on their behalf. This is not synonymous with impairment in the patient's/participant's autonomy it is only a reflection of the Nigerian cultural context. Hence, it may be appropriate to have a family member sign on behalf of such participants who want to uphold this cultural context in a research. As long as coercion is not felt in the decision, there is nothing wrong in asking others to sign on behalf of the participant in such a situation described above. RAs must be able to separate when it is a **free-will choice** from when coercion is involved.

Below are some examples of consent scenarios you may encounter:

1. Participants that cannot read or write:
 - a. Can thumbprint the consent form
 - b. Can choose to have a family member sign on their behalf as long as that is their choice and is devoid of coercion.
2. Participants who would like to participate in the research study voluntarily, but opt to have a family member sign on their behalf:
 - a. Can choose to have a family member sign on their behalf
3. Participants who are weak or ill, but would like to participate in the research study voluntarily:
 - a. Can choose to have a family member sign on their behalf