

expanding the database to encompass more laboratories and research projects. This expansion would benefit non-invasive infant research by distributing the burden of recruitment among more research groups, and by taking further advantage of the parental tendency to enroll in additional studies as they become more comfortable with researchers and the research experience.

Demographic trends in those who consent

When asked to reflect on demographic trends among parents who enrolled their infant in a behavioural study, almost all researchers established that their participants had diverse backgrounds. Most mentioned that the majority of their participants seemed to be of high socioeconomic status and have more extensive educational backgrounds. However, studies offering paid compensation also attracted many participants of low socioeconomic status. Middle-class families were consistently perceived to be the most difficult to recruit.

Many researchers also specified that families with postsecondary graduates and professionals in health-related or child care-related fields were more likely to be interested in participating in research. These findings support the observation that parents are more willing to consent to studies when they feel a personal connection with the research topic.¹¹ However, this tendency may result in sampling bias and reduce the generalizability of infant studies to the entire population. Limitations in external validity are of

major concern when creating new developmental measures for testing infants.

LIMITATIONS

This study only involved researchers from McMaster University due to time constraints associated with an undergraduate thesis project; thus, the findings may neither be generalizable to other institutions nor represent all recruitment strategies. Furthermore, as the researchers who participated were not required to list the studies they were currently working on, it is possible that some studies may have been over or under-represented.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored researchers' perspectives on the challenges associated with infant recruitment, effective and ineffective recruitment strategies, and perceived demographic characteristics among consenting parents. While additional research is needed to better understand why parents may be opting out of studies, researchers should use these findings to inform their recruitment practices.

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