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## Letters

# Ethics review in research

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## Time has come for reassessment

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EDITOR—Glasziou and Chalmers are to be congratulated for their stand on the important issue of ethics review.<sup>1</sup> For many years MSc students in this school undertook projects considering policy questions facing local trusts and health authorities. These typically entailed a literature review and interviews with managers, clinicians, and other relevant stakeholders. These interviewees are now deemed research subjects, thus requiring each student to obtain ethics approval.

The lengthy process of getting approval has forced us to advise students to abandon this model of research, concentrating instead on desk based studies. The links forged with the key stakeholders meant that many of these projects led to improvements in the care provided, and it is far from clear, at least to me, that this development has increased the total sum of human welfare.

## Footnotes

- Competing interests None declared.

## References

1. Glasziou P, Chalmers I. Ethics review roulette: what can we learn? *BMJ* 2004; **328**: 121–2. (17 January.)