Table 1 General characteristics of children and their parents who consented for their child to be involved in research and those who refused

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Consenters (n = 98)</th>
<th>Refusers (n = 259)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) age (years)</td>
<td>8.6 (7.2)</td>
<td>2.6 (1.2)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (male)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease severity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease/reason for admission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central nervous system disease</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respiratory disease</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular disease</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gastroenterology disease</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genitourinary disease</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haematology/oncology disease</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endocrine disease</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetic disease</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease is recurrent</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education b</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
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<td>23.5</td>
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<td>Postgraduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>Widowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>33.0 (7.0)</td>
<td>34.6 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>29.3 (3.0)</td>
<td>30.4 (6.0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous experience of care</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had bad experience with hospital/physicians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquainted with the involved physicians</td>
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<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicting views between parents</td>
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<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Television</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other patients</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician or nurse</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>72.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books or Internet</td>
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<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P < 0.01 for child’s age; no other significant differences were found between consenters and refusers by Student-t test or chi-squared test (Fisher exact).

bLowest level of education among the parents.