

## When journals ask to make data shareable

### Main factors to consider to inform the decision

The following factors may be considered in any order. It is prudent to consider them before submitting a manuscript to a journal to ensure that the journal's requirements can be met in a manner that is consistent with legal, contractual, ethical, and deontological standards.

**Are the data to be shared “personal information” whose confidentiality is protected by law?**

See page 2 for more details.

**Are there any restrictions on sharing the data?**

Examples: data use agreement, consent, embargo on dissemination, data management plan or strategy, decision of the Commission d'accès à l'information, decision of the Director of professional services of a health institution, legislation protecting personal information.

**Is the consent of the individuals concerned by the data necessary to undertake this sharing?**

If so, does the original consent allow this sharing or is a new consent necessary?

**Is research ethics board approval required for this sharing?**

If so, does the original approval allow this sharing or is a new approval required?

**How will the use of shared data be regulated?**

Examples: unrestricted public access, community membership verification, access committee, research ethics board, commitment to protect data and limit their use.

**Is anyone else's agreement required before sharing?**

Example: co-researcher, community concerned by the data.

**Does the journal have exceptions where data sharing is not an option?**

Examples: data from third parties, legal or contractual obligations, protection of confidentiality.

To answer some of these questions, it may be useful to consult with a research ethics board or the [person responsible for the protection of personal information](#) in the organization concerned.

Are the data to be shared “**personal information**” whose confidentiality is protected by law?

“personal information” is information about a natural person that allows that person to be identified

**The possibility to identify increases by associating certain data**

- The association **does not allow** to identify an individual
- The association **sometimes allows** to identify an individual
- The association **allows** to identify an individual

**Example 1 Rare blood type of a patient associated with...**



- ... the province of residence of the patient.
- ... the postal code of the patient.
- ... the email address of the patient.

**Example 2 Observation grid for a class associated with...**



- ... the disadvantage index of the school where the teacher works.
- ... the name of the school where the teacher works.
- ... a photo of all the teacher's educational materials.

**Example 3 Amount of contaminants in the soil associated with...**



- ... the type of soil where an individual's residence is located.
- ... the cause of the contamination and the city where an individual's residence is located.
- ... an aerial photo of an individual's residence.

“Personal information” is confidential, with some exceptions. It can be regulated by different laws, for example:

- [Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information;](#)
- [Act respecting the protection of personal information in the private sector.](#)

Examples are provided for illustrative purposes only. The definition of “personal information” is taken from the [Commission d'accès à l'information](#).

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