**DATA PRIVACY NOTICE – DPhil project (Guilherme Pessoa-Amorim)**

The University of Oxford is a world-leader in developing systems to ensure that information is stored safely for research studies like this one. You can read the University's Data Privacy Notice on the Nuffield Department of Population Health website (<https://www.ndph.ox.ac.uk/about/data-privacy-notice-1/data-privacy-notice>)

The University of Oxford is both the data controller and data processor for all information used in this research project, which means that it is responsible for processing and looking after this information and for ensuring it is used properly. All information is stored securely using encryption and password protection and access is limited to only those members of staff who need to use the information.

**Why are these data needed?**

NHS Digital is the body responsible for collecting and caring for information that is generated as part of routine clinical care in England. This is primarily used for planning and reimbursement to hospitals and GP practices, but in some instances can also be used for research purposes. Using this sort of routinely collected information may help reduce complexity and costs of running medical studies, therefore potentially leading to more and better research.

NHS Digital have recently announced the release of a new resource concerning information on all medications dispensed to patients in England, dating back to 2015 – this is called the Medicines Dispensed in Primary Care dataset (<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/medicines-dispensed-in-primary-care-nhsbsa-data>). It is the first time that such information will be made available for medical research at an individual patient level (instead of a summary). Information on drugs received by patients is of great value to medical research - collecting this information on large groups of people can help researchers better understand how patients are being treated, and how these treatments relate to their future health. These insights can help spot certain treatment patterns (in specific conditions, over time, or in different regions or settings), and trigger improvement measures. This information is also of vital importance to clinical trials testing new medicines, both to identify patients who may benefit from the new drug (based on what their current treatment is), and to understand the possible impact of changes in other treatments.

Although this new information has a great potential to help conduct medical research, it is important that some technical aspects are explored before. This includes understanding what sort of information is included in this new resource, how it is recorded, and how practical it is to use it for research. Given the size and complexity of the information that will be provided, some development work also needs to be done to help manage this information and make better sense of it.

The aim of this project is to investigate this new resource in detail, and develop the technical aspects necessary to deal with this information. The results of this project will then be shared with other scientists and to NHS Digital to help promote research using this resource. The work conducted will finally help us understand whether it will be feasible to use this as the main source for information on what other medications are being prescribed to patients in clinical trials.

**How are these data collected?**

The information held by NHS Digital is collected through the NHS Business Services Authority, the institution responsible for gathering all information on drugs dispensed and claimed in the community in England for reimbursement purposes. This information is then processed and can be made available to researchers by NHS Digital. NHS Digital also decide on who can access this information. This is subject to a contract and publicly disclosed in the NHS Digital website.

A complete version of the information available on the Medicines Dispensed in Primary Care dataset will be requested from NHS Digital. This information will be pseudonymised, which means that although NHS Digital are able to identify a person based on the information provided, it is not possible for researchers at the University of Oxford to do so as they do not have access to other parts of the information required for this. The information received will include details on medical aspects, such as prescriptions, as well as other information relating to the person who received a prescription, such as age, gender, and Lower Layer Super Output Area (a classification used for geographical location which includes different postcodes and 1000-3000 people).

**How will these data be kept secure?**

The study is sponsored by the University of Oxford. The University is the data controller and data processor for the information received from NHS Digital. This means that the University is responsible for processing and looking after this information and using it properly. No information that can directly identify someone will be provided to the University of Oxford.

All information will be kept in computers within the University, processed and stored securely. These computers are located in the Richard Doll Building and Big Data Institute, University of Oxford, Old Road Campus, Roosevelt Drive, Oxford OX3 7LF. The information may be accessed and processed by employees of the University of Oxford remotely over the internet, using secure connections between computers within the University network. The data will not be accessed internationally. All information received will be kept within the University systems, except for aggregated versions that may be shared to communicate the results of this project.

**Who can access these data?**

This information will only be access by employees of the University of Oxford working in this project, who have completed the necessary training in data protection, and in line with Nuffield Department of Population Health and University of Oxford regulations. The information used in this study may also be looked at, in confidence, by authorised individuals from the University of Oxford to check that the study is being carried out correctly.

**How long will these data be held?**

This information will be initially kept for a duration of five years after it is received, as per standard NHS Digital procedures. This is to ensure that all the necessary work can be undertaken, and that it can later be evaluated by authorised individuals from the University of Oxford to ensure the study is being carried out correctly. However, the data may be kept longer if required for other research needs, in which case appropriate permission will be sought from NHS Digital.

**What is the legal basis for processing these data?**

The University of Oxford is using this information for research purposes; it will only process this information as necessary to undertake research that is being carried out in the public interest. This is known under data protection law as our *legal basis* for processing this information.

**What are my data rights?**

The nature of the information provided to the University of Oxford is controlled by NHS Digital. A transparency notice regarding how NHS Digital process patient information can be found at <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/our-work/keeping-patient-data-safe/gdpr>. More detailed information regarding data protection in the Medicines dataset can be found here <https://digital.nhs.uk/about-nhs-digital/our-work/keeping-patient-data-safe/gdpr/gdpr-register/nhs-business-services-authority-nhsbsa-medicines-data>.

The University of Oxford will be unable to amend or delete any information received based on someone’s request in relation to information about them, as it will not be possible to identify an individual based on the information received by the University. NHS Digital have an opt-out system in place regarding data sharing, which can be accessed through <https://digital.nhs.uk/services/national-data-opt-out>. Further information on how the University of Oxford complies with data rights is provided by the Information Commissioners Office and can be found here: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/node/673106>

If you have any queries about this study you can reach the investigator (Guilherme Pessoa-Amorim) by email at [guilherme.pessoa-amorim@ndph.ox.ac.uk](mailto:guilherme.pessoa-amorim@ndph.ox.ac.uk). If you wish to raise a complaint, you can either contact the investigator via the contact details above or the University of Oxford's Data Protection Officer via email at: data.protection@admin.ox.ac.uk or by telephone on +44 (0) 1865 270285, who will investigate the matter. If you are not satisfied with our response or believe we are processing data in a way that is not lawful you can complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) or call their helpline on 0303 123 1113.