

Our research explained

## BRCsnapshots

### Using GP patient records for research: What do the public think?



#### What we know

Every time you visit a GP, the doctor keeps records of the visit, including your health issues, any prescriptions or referrals.

The combined records of large numbers of patients are often used to carry out medical research. These records do not show personal details (such as name, or NHS number) or the written notes a GP makes. This means that patients' written consent is not legally required.

However, we do not know much about what the public think of using patient records for research. We carried out a study to find this out.

#### What we did

We observed six public events, organised to discuss the use of GP patient records for research. We wanted to hear what the members of the community thought about their records being used for purposes other than their care.



6

Public events  
observed by  
researchers



111

Individual members of  
the local community  
attended



## What we found

- Many people who attended these events were not aware that their GP records could be used for research.
- People were positive about using patient records for research to improve the health of local people.
- Some were worried about data security and the misuse of data by others such as pharmaceutical companies, the police or insurance companies.
- Some saw investing limited NHS funds in GP services as more important than supporting research using GP records.

## Public responses

- “It will benefit us as it will help to improve the healthcare service in general”
- “I don’t mind who has access to my records, so long as it is not a commercial company”
- “Appointments are most important and this is what we should be investing in”



### About the study

The study was supported by the NIHR Guy’s and St Thomas’ Biomedical Research Centre.

### Further information

This research was completed by Dr David Wyatt, Dr Jenny Cook and Professor Christopher McKevitt

Journal Article: <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/8/1/e019378>

For further information on how data is used for research at Guy’s and St Thomas’ please visit <http://bit.ly/gsttdata>

### Patient and Public Advisory Group (PPIAG)

This research snapshot has been put together with support of the Patient and Public Advisory Group. To find out more about how you can work with us to improve healthcare through research contact [brcppi@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:brcppi@gstt.nhs.uk)



### About our NIHR Guy’s and St Thomas’ Biomedical Research Centre

Our NIHR Biomedical Research Centre is a partnership between Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Foundation Trust and King’s College London. We work to develop and deliver new medicines and diagnostics to patients. We drive research and innovation into the NHS to provide maximum impact to our patients.

[www.guysandstthomasbrc.nihr.ac.uk](http://www.guysandstthomasbrc.nihr.ac.uk)

