

# Reflecting on the TCPS definitions of “anonymous” and “anonymized”

Secretariat on Responsible  
Conduct of Research

## Goal

To engage in a collaborative dialogue on challenges that may exist with the TCPS definitions of anonymous versus anonymized information.

# Anonymous information

“the information never had identifiers associated with it (e.g., anonymous surveys) and risk of identification of individuals is low or very low.”

*(Chapter 5, Section A)*

## Article 2.4

“REB review is not required for research that relies exclusively on secondary use of anonymous information, or anonymous human biological materials, so long as the process of data linkage or recording or dissemination of results does not generate identifiable information.”

# Anonymized information

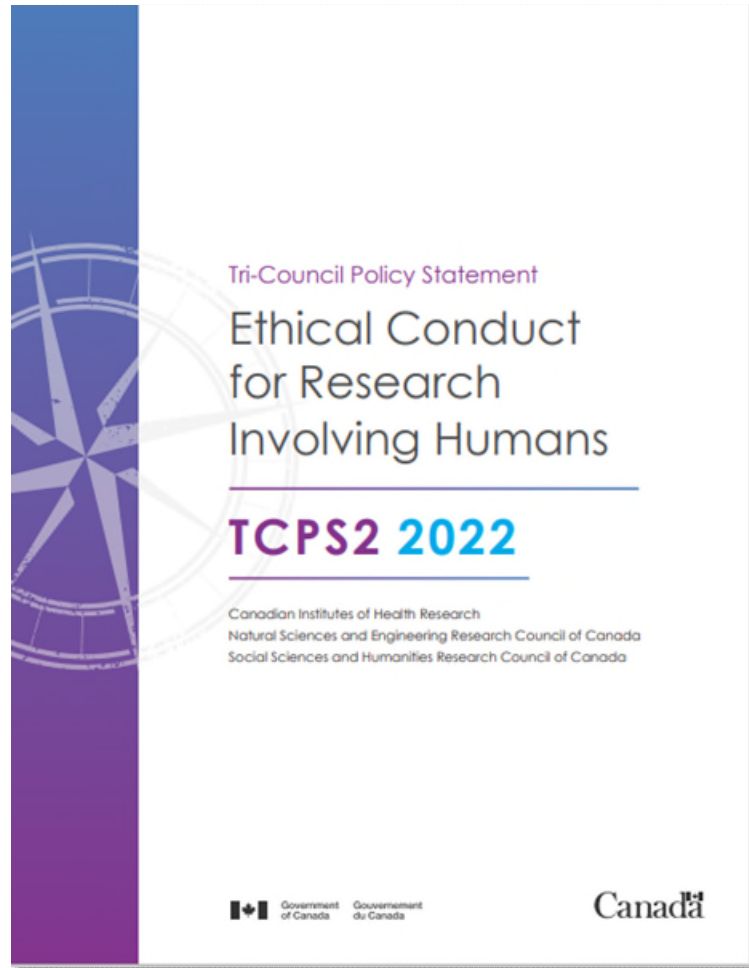
“the information is irrevocably stripped of direct identifiers, a code is not kept to allow future re-linkage, and risk of reidentification of individuals from remaining indirect identifiers is low or very low.”

*(Chapter 5, Section A)*

REB review is generally required for secondary use of such information.



**Based on the TCPS definitions, anonymized  
information cannot be treated as anonymous.**



# THANK YOU!

**Please do not hesitate to contact us  
with any TCPS interpretation  
requests!**

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