

Ethics, Privacy, and Personal Health Information

Carla Heggie, Adjunct (FGS), School of Information Management, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The following discussion questions are provided as an additional educational tool to accompany this fireside chat video. Please feel free to select the questions that are most relevant to your committee or group, revise and adapt them as needed, etc. As always, we welcome feedback on this or any other NSHEN resource.

Questions:

- What stood out the most to you in the discussion?
- Was there anything in the interview that surprised you?
- Carla talks about how society judges us on our health. Can you give some examples of this from your own life, whether as a health care provider or as a patient?
- Physicians have a legal and ethical obligation to protect patient privacy. Discuss the role of privacy and its importance in the physician–patient relationship.
- How do we balance concerns around privacy with other relevant values when dealing with personal health information?
- What are the implications of using electronic health records for both patients’ privacy and health care professionals’ efforts to protect confidentiality?
- Carla states that all individuals have an obligation to protect their privacy and personal information, by knowing when personal information is being disclosed, to whom it is disclosed, and what the information will be used for.
 - Do you agree with her that we often don’t pay enough attention to how our personal information is being used? Why/why not?

Resources

Canadian Medical Association (2017) Principles for the Protection of Patient Privacy. Policy published 2017.

<https://www.cma.ca/sites/default/files/2018-11/PD18-02.pdf>

Kasperbauer, T.J. (2019). Protecting health privacy even when privacy is lost. *Journal of Medical Ethics*; Vol 46 (11); 768-772. <https://jme.bmj.com/content/46/11/768>

Knoppers, B. M. and Thorogood, A.M. (2017) Ethics and Big Data in Health. *Current Opinion in Systems Biology*; Vol 4(2017): 53-57. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2452310017300264>

Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness: Personal Health Information Act
<https://novascotia.ca/dhw/phia/PHIA-legislation.asp>

Nova Scotia College of Nursing (2017) Confidentiality and Privacy of Personal Health Information. Practice Guideline. Published April 2017.

https://cdn1.nscn.ca/sites/default/files/documents/resources/Confidentiality_Privacy_Personal_Health_Information.pdf

Nova Scotia, Department of Health & Wellness. Background video about PHIA:

<http://novascotia.ca/dhw/phia>

Ozair, F.F., Jamshed, N., Sharma, A. and Aggerwal, P. (2015) Ethical issues in electronic health records: A general overview. *Perspect. Clin Res.* 2015 Apr-Jun; 6(2):73-76.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4394583/>

Some articles require access with an institutional login. If you need assistance in accessing an article please email NSHEN administrator Krista Mleczko-Skerry at Krista.MleczkoSkerry@iwbk.nshealth.ca