

USING DATA FROM MEDICARE AUSTRALIA IN THE D-HEALTH TRIAL

Information held by Medicare Australia is extremely useful for medical research. It enables us to obtain data without having to rely on people's memories.

What sort of information do we collect?

With consent we are able to access data from two databases: Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

Medicare Claims History: The Medicare claims data tells us about the provision of medical services outside the public hospital system. Some examples* of the data we are interested in follow:

- Treatment of skin cancer
- Number of visits to a general practitioner
- Testing for diabetes

PBS Claims History: The PBS captures data about medicines that are prescribed. The prescription of medicines can tell us about participants' health, so this is very useful data. Some examples* are below:

- Antibiotics
- Medications to treat high blood pressure
- Statin medicines to treat high cholesterol
- Insulin or other medications to treat diabetes
- Anti-inflammatory drugs to treat muscle aches and pains
- Inhaled corticosteroids to treat lung diseases

What sort of information DON'T we collect?

The Medicare and PBS databases are primarily used to track the costs of providing health services to Australians. This limits the type of information that is available. For example, we can't find out the reason that you went to the doctor, the type of skin cancer that you had treated or the results of any tests.

How do we handle your data?

Medicare Australia releases data to us under extremely strict conditions of confidentiality. We receive an electronic file that does not have any names included. We hold the data on a computer server behind a firewall with very tight security.

Information about any individual participant in isolation is not helpful for our research. It is only by comparing information for large groups of people that we can come to any conclusions about whether or not taking a vitamin D supplement affects different health conditions. That means that we only ever examine the data for groups of participants. For example, we examine the *proportion* of people who were treated for skin cancer or prescribed an antibiotic; or we might compare the *average* number of visits to the doctor in the two groups.

To let us know whether or not you would be willing to allow access to your Medicare/PBS claims data please [click here](#).

If you have any questions please feel free to call us on 1300 735 920.

*These examples are not a complete list but give an indication of the type of information we will receive.