

## BMJ Standards on Anonymisation (Checklist)

Patient confidentiality can never be 100% guaranteed. For this reason, BMJ requests that all authors provide a valid signed consent form for all manuscripts that report on (or relate to) patients, even where data is considered anonymised.

Must **NOT** include ANY of the following patient **DIRECT IDENTIFIERS**

Direct Identifiers are details that point explicitly to a particular patient and should always be removed

**Patient Name** e.g. first or last name, full name, maiden name, mother's maiden name, or alias

**Geographic location** e.g. the name of a village or town where the patient lives or received treatment

**Age** i.e. exact age

**Identity Numbers** e.g. passport number, social security details, NHS medical record number.

**Biometric Data** e.g. fingerprints, retina scans, voice signatures, facial geometry

**Photographs/images including identifiable facial features** (No blurring or obscuring is accepted)

**Images:**  
additional requirements

Including x-rays, laparoscopic images, ultrasound images, pathology slides, or images of undistinctive parts of the body or multimedia files (e.g. video, audio)

**Identifying marks / text** must be removed unless the image has been licensed by an agency

**Consent** the author is responsible for ensuring they have obtained all necessary consents to allow us to publish the image.

**Library / agency images** may be accepted at BMJ's discretion provided that the author is responsible for procuring any necessary consent or licence to ensure the image can be published by us

Must **NOT** include THREE OR MORE of the following patient **INDIRECT IDENTIFIERS**

Any deviation from this rule must be specifically authorised by BMJ. For more information please refer to Research Integrity Team [publication.ethics@bmj.com](mailto:publication.ethics@bmj.com)

Indirect Identifiers may not constitute personal data on their own (since more than once person could share these traits) but, when linked with other direct or indirect identifiers, could be used to identify a specific person

**Exact dates of patient related events** e.g. birth, death, marriage, divorce, hospital admission, discharge date

**Place of birth**

**Occupation**

**Race**

**Religion**

**Geographical indicators** e.g. village, town, city, county, province, state relating to the patient or the author (a range of authors from different locations would not be considered an indirect identifier, but authors from the same location could be used to infer geographical location of the patient)

**Age** e.g. when submitted as an age range (i.e. early 30s, 40s, infant, neonatal etc)

**Medical conditions** e.g. rare medical conditions particularly

**Other identifying details** e.g. details about family and family history

**Organisation / affiliation** e.g. a hospital or other organisation (a range of authors from different organisations would not be considered an indirect identifier, but authors from the same organisation could be used to identify the patient)