



FAQs: Indigenous Data Sovereignty

The purpose of the NCIME Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles, data governance framework, data sharing agreements, and suite of policy and security documents are to advance the interests of Indigenous medical students, faculty, and residents, and to enact Indigenous data governance. Indigenous control over Indigenous data for the advancement of Indigenous peoples is our goal.

What is Indigenous Data Sovereignty?

Indigenous Data Sovereignty is the inherent right of Indigenous peoples and nations to govern, collect, own, and use data that originates from Indigenous peoples and their communities. It emerges from the ongoing and inextinguishable right of Indigenous peoples to govern themselves, as we have always done. Indigenous Data Sovereignty is also in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, specifically articles 3, 4, 5, 15(i), 18, 19, 20(i), 23, 31, 32, 33, 38, and 42.

Who are the Data Owners under the IDS Principles?

The individual who gives the data is the data owner. This would include Indigenous medical students, faculty members, and residents. The data in reference here will be data collected from medical schools that emerges from Indigenous peoples.

What is Free, Prior, and Informed Consent?

The concept of "free, prior and informed consent" or FPIC comes directly from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and comes from the need to consult with Indigenous peoples properly and adequately on matters of importance to them, involving lands, resources, and issues that directly impact Indigenous peoples and their communities. Entering into a respectful relationship with Indigenous peoples and their data requires upholding FPIC.

What is Relational Accountability and why does it matter to data stewardship and collection?

The principle of Relational Accountability centers Indigenous worldviews by connecting our responsibility as data stewards, collectors, and analysts to a wider web of relations. Relational accountability is a direct response to the extractive, non-Indigenous modes of research and data collection (Reo 2019).

What is ethical data and ethical collection?

Ethical data are those that are generated with the intent of supporting positive change for Indigenous communities. Moreover, ethical data is data that reflects the needs of Indigenous peoples, while seeking to also bring our attention to our successes. The deficit model of statistical research typically focuses on negative analyses, and feeds into stereotypical representations of Indigenous peoples and communities.

What is Data Dependency?

Data dependency is the external control and access of Indigenous data. Data dependency is created when data are collected from Indigenous peoples, but the driving questions, and results are not intended for Indigenous peoples or communities. Typically, Indigenous data has been developed and used in ways that do not reflect the needs and realities of Indigenous peoples. Moreover, data that is collected from Indigenous peoples is felt to be inaccessible by community members, and beneficial returns do not materialize. Moving away from colonial data dependency and into self-governance of Indigenous data is in the interests of Indigenous peoples.