Case Records Interactive Search (CRIS) Usage Regulations – Local Oxford Health searches

Background

CRIS provides a means of analysing de-identified data from the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT) electronic case records. Access to clinical information is clearly a sensitive issue and a security model was developed which has been considered and approved by the Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Caldicott Guardian and the Trust Executive as well as forming part of the original ethics application.

Security Requirements of CRIS use

CRIS can only be accessed from the OHFT network. Data from CRIS must be kept within the Trust firewall and can only be saved on the CRIS shared drive on OHFT computers. CRIS data CANNOT be saved on personal or encrypted USB sticks. CRIS data CANNOT be emailed from OHFT machines to your personal email or a University email. Please be aware that additional permission is required for derived data to be analysed outside of the OHFT firewall, from the CRIS Oversight Group. CRIS researchers are only permitted to access their own CRIS Project folders and files located either within the CRIS Remote Desktop or the G:\Oxfordshire\CRIS Projects. Access is not permitted to other projects folders and files. Please also note that currently SPSS and R are the only statistical programmes that are available at the Research Team.

The security model includes regular audits of searches carried out using CRIS (all searches by all users are recorded and can be audited). For this to be possible, we keep a record of all projects carried out involving CRIS analysis along with general specification of the type of searches which will be required.

Ethics and research governance approval assume anonymity of the data analysed. As with any dataset, there is the potential within this database to compromise anonymity by generating unique variable combinations or rare categories. CRIS users are asked to consider whether this issue may occur and strategies to avoid compromising anonymity. Alternatively, they may wish to obtain specific ethics approval for an analysis where this risk is likely to be significant. Searching under clinician’ names are a sensitive issue; this type of information in research would have to be justified.

Rationale for Application Process

The CRIS Oversight Group, led by the Trust Caldicott Guardian will review all requests to use CRIS as a de-identified database. It is important for the Trust to demonstrate that OHFT clinical data are used responsibly and for projects with demonstrable research and clinical importance.

The future of CRIS, as with other aspects of OHFT research, depends on successful bids for future funding. This in turn requires evidence of use of the database, hence the need to keep a record of individual projects.

The CRIS Oversight Group has a role in facilitating CRIS analyses and to advise on how best to extract robust data. The database is potentially complex and users will be encouraged to collaborate and share expertise and hands-on experience. The information submitted in the project application form will be used to provide a database for this purpose to assist future researchers.

Collaborations and Grant or Research Applications for use of CRIS data

All work conducted using CRIS must be reviewed and approved by the CRIS Oversight Group. It is a requirement to inform the CRIS Oversight Group of any grant or research application, including all external collaborations, which require the use of CRIS data, either prior to initial submission, or immediately via a change request to an existing CRIS application.