



Data for Decisions & the Patron program of research

Data Privacy and Security

Data for Decisions, incorporating the Patron program of research, is a University of Melbourne, Department of General Practice research initiative in partnership with general practices in Australia. Patron is the name of our repository of de-identified primary care data. GRHANITE® is the name of the software used to extract, de-identify and transfer the data.

GRHANITE SOFTWARE

[GRHANITE®](#) is University of Melbourne developed computer software that works in any environment where data are routinely collected. Its first prototype was developed by [Associate Professor Douglas Boyle](#) in 2007 and has been used extensively in the primary care arena; it is currently installed in many GP clinics throughout Australia.

GRHANITE® addresses many barriers that can hinder the use of sensitive, routinely collected data and can interface with many GP practice management computer software systems. Currently, the *Data for Decisions* programs supports Medical Director, Best Practice, and Zedmed. GRHANITE® provides GPs or practice managers with easy access to a patient 'withdrawal' checkbox and has the capability to provide privacy-protecting record linkage.

PRIVACY

GRHANITE® optimises patient and health provider privacy by **not** including, in the extracted data, fields where person-identifying information (i.e. patients, practitioners **or** other staff) are normally captured. If necessary, the data originating from a GP practice can be re-identified by sending it back to that practice and using the practice's re-identification 'key' that is unique to the practice. Such re-identification might be done if a practice agrees to participate in a clinical trial (pending appropriate data and ethical approvals) where the practice may contact patients with certain characteristics to determine their interest in participating.

Data for Decisions adheres to the [University of Melbourne Privacy Policy](#) which outlines our obligation to comply with the relevant Australian regulations and legislations. Researchers that use information sourced from the Patron database are legally required to take all measures to protect privacy and they must not take any steps to attempt to re-identify any data that is provided to them.

DATA STORAGE

The Patron data repository is physically housed within the University of Melbourne environment. Patron data storage is currently within the [Nectar Cloud](#) eResearch infrastructure facilitates; the University of Melbourne is Nectar's lead agent. No data within the Patron dataset is stored within an off-shore server or outside of the University controlled server environment.

DATA SECURITY

The team at HaBIC R² Health Informatics Unit, within the Department of General Practice, are experts in cross-sectoral data capture, consent management and privacy-protecting record management. We employ international good practice policies and procedures in our data warehousing and curation to 'future proof' against risk, and we adhere to all national legislation around privacy and data security. Our active risk mitigation strategies are regularly reviewed.

No Patron datasets will ever be publicly accessible, but findings from the research, using aggregate data, will be made available through publications and reports. Every researcher that accesses the datasets can do so only after agreeing to meet strict ethical, legal and data governance standards. It is a requirement that data breaches are reported within three days, including any **notifiable data breaches** that will be reported to the [Australian Information Commissioner](#).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF OUR PARTNERS

General practices partnering with us should continue to maintain the security of their own systems. This includes notifying us of any security issues or data breaches within three days, if you become aware of any.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Detailed information about GRHANITE: <https://www.grhanite.com/technologies>

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