1. What is the Secondary Use of Health Data?

Secondary use of health data refers to the analysis of medical information for purposes beyond direct patient care. Examples include the processing of health data for **public health, research, medical innovation, health policy-making** or **regulation.** The secondary use of health data aims to **extract knowledge and conclusions to improve the healthcare provided to citizens and to the general population.**

2. What are the benefits for the citizen?

Improved Healthcare: The analysis of health data enables the identification of patterns that can lead to the development of more effective treatments, better diagnosis, more precise and personalized treatment plans and, consequently, improved results for patients.

Disease Prevention: The analysis of population health data has great potential to improve the identification, prediction and early response to disease outbreaks (such as COVID-19). It also supports the identification of risk factors, allowing the development of more effective prevention and response strategies.

Improved Health Policies: Secondary use of health data can identify patterns towards creating effective and targeted health policies, enabling a more robust health system that better meets the population's needs.

Contribution to Scientific Research: Citizens have the opportunity to support the advancement of science and medicine, knowing that their data can contribute to developing new health technologies that will benefit society as a whole.

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SPMS EPE Serviços Partilhados do Ministério da Saúde
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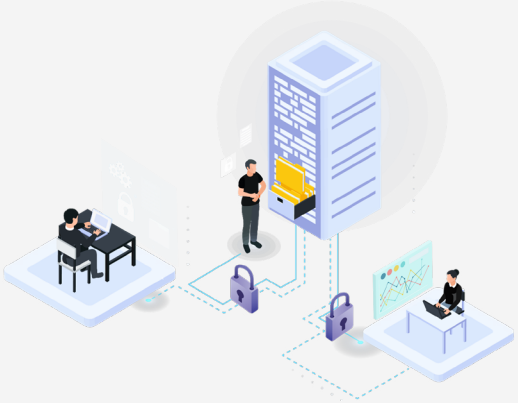
3. How is the citizen's information protected?



The secondary use of health data is based on concrete policies to protect the citizen's privacy and to ensure data security, being carried out under strict measures so that the citizen cannot be identified at any stage of the data processing. These measures include data anonymization or pseudonymization, along with its processing only for specific authorized purposes and according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, in force). Additional security requirements are defined in the European Health Data Space Regulation (with political agreement in April 2024), which aims to create a secure infrastructure with organizational and technical measures to warrant data privacy and security (for example, it requires data analysis to be carried out in a secure processing environment, that features high security measures and where all access and activities are monitored and recorded).

4. What initiatives are in progress to advance the Secondary Use of Health Data?

The European Health Data Space Regulation, expected to be approved by the end of 2024, will define the legal and operational basis for the secondary use of health data, establishing strict rules for data protection, guaranteeing secure infrastructures for data processing and sharing, as well as the ethical and safe use of data. At national level, the **HealthData@PT** action, coordinated by SPMS, will create the national infrastructure, network and the fundamental elements needed to advance the access to quality health data for secondary use purposes.

SPMS is also involved in several European initiatives that contribute to advance the Secondary Use of health data, such as:

- **TEHDAS2 –** Establish guidelines and technical specifications for the implementation of the services necessary for the operationalization of the EHDS regulatory and digital framework for secondary use purposes.

- **QUANTUM –** Develop a data quality and utility label (foreseen in article 56 of the EHDS regulation), providing a standardized tool to aid the data user finding relevant health data for secondary use purposes.

- **EUCAIM –** Create a repository of medical images of cancer (from more than 90,000 European patients) and development of data analysis and Artificial Intelligence tools to improve clinical practice and results.