

What is the Difference between Privacy and Confidentiality in Research?

Privacy is defined as the quality or condition of being secluded from the presence or view of others. The state of being free from unsanctioned intrusion, e.g. a person's right to privacy. It is control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually) with others.

Confidentiality is discretion in keeping secret information; the ethical principle or legal right that a physician or other health professional will hold secret all information relating to a patient, unless the patient gives consent permitting disclosure.

The Bottom Line: Privacy refers to *people*, Confidentiality refers to *data* about people.

Example Responses from the Application:

6.5 Privacy Protections: Privacy refers to persons and to their interest in controlling access of others to themselves. Privacy can be defined in terms of having control over the extent, timing and circumstances of sharing oneself (physically, behaviorally, or intellectually) with others. **What precautions will be used to ensure subject privacy is protected?**

"Patients will be consented in a private room out of earshot of other patients in the office. They will have the opportunity to discuss the consent form in the private room with their family members if they so choose. The procedures will be done in a private clinical setting, and if at anytime the participant feels embarrassed or uncomfortable, they will have the option to withdraw from the study."

6.6 Confidentiality Precautions: Confidentiality is an extension of the concept of privacy; it refers to the subject's understanding of, and agreement to, the ways identifiable information will be stored and shared. Identifiable information can be printed information, electronic information or visual information such as photographs. **What precautions will be used to maintain the confidentiality of identifiable information?**

"Only the Principal Investigator and appropriate members of the research staff as designated in the Protocol Summary will have access to participants' Protected Health Information (PHI). All PHI and study data will be maintained on a password-protected computer and a locked filing cabinet in a locked office."