



Case 1: Confidentiality and Data Access

A clinical psychologist-investigator, whom you know, did a pilot study of psychiatric patients with certain characteristics. This work suggested interesting implications for your own studies, and you approached him about being a co-investigator on a new study. His role was to interview a certain population of patients and score them for certain characteristics. Your work involved analysis of biological samples taken from the research subjects. You agreed that you would be first author on any publications in your field, and he would be first author on any publications in clinical psychology.

The work was completed several years ago and you published two articles in your field with yourself as first author. Your colleague has since taken on heavy administrative responsibilities and has yet not written anything. He was only able to participate in writing one of the two articles you drafted, and so was listed as an author only on that one. You are aware that, as PI for the grant that funded the work, you have responsibility to ensure confidentiality of patient data and are concerned that your collaborator has data of a sensitive nature. Although your collaborator removed names, addresses and patient record numbers from the data, the interviews paint a detailed picture of the physical and mental conditions of each patient, details that the psychologist says he needs in writing up his own articles.

Your colleague says that he does intend to publish based on his pilot study and your joint work, but he does not know when.

- What do you do?