

# Why “What Data Are Necessary for This Project?” and Other Basic Questions are Important to Address in Public Health Informatics Practice and Research

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# Why “What Data Are Necessary for This Project?” and Other Basic Questions are Important to Address in Public Health Informatics Practice and Research

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Name: Dixon-2011-why.pdf  
Size: 285.8Kb  
Format: PDF

[View/Open](#)

Permanent Link: <http://hdl.handle.net/1805/4335>

Date: 2011-12

Keywords: [public health informatics](#); [information management](#)

Cite As: Dixon, B. E., & Grannis, S. J. (2011). Why “What Data Are Necessary for This Project?” and Other Basic Questions are Important to Address in Public Health Informatics Practice and Research. *Online journal of public health informatics*, 3(3).

## Abstract:

Despite the likelihood of poor quality data flowing from clinical information systems to public health information systems, current policies and practices are pushing for the adoption and use of even greater numbers of electronic data feeds. However, using poor data can lead to poor decision-making outcomes in public health. Therefore public health informatics professionals need to assess, and periodically re-evaluate, the quality of electronic data and their sources. Unfortunately there is currently a paucity of tools and strategies in use across public health agencies. Our Center of Excellence in Public Health Informatics is working to develop and disseminate tools and strategies for supporting on-going assessment of data quality and solutions for overcoming data quality challenges. In this article, we outline the need for better data quality assessment and our approach to the development of new tools and strategies. In other words, public health informatics

professionals need to ask questions about the electronic data received by public health agencies, and we hope to create tools and strategies to help informaticians ask questions that will lead to improved population health outcomes.

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