

NO. 94-3

USE OF INDIVIDUALS' INITIALS OR OTHER IDENTIFYING PARTICULARS  
IN PUBLICATIONS OR PRESENTATION MATERIALS

Updated policy on the use of individuals' initials, names, or other "identifying particulars" is provided below. This applies to all material cleared through CDC\* for publication or presentation in paper, electronic, or other media.

Generally, Government-wide guidelines are to avoid using "identifying particulars" in written descriptions such as medical case histories. The policy remains that names and initials are not to be included in materials approved under the auspices of CDC, as described on page 2. The editorial staffs of CDC organizational components should not approve for publication or presentation any documents which contain names or initials of persons unless the context is similar to the exceptions described on page 2.

Widespread dissemination of this policy is encouraged, particularly to staff members who develop materials for publication or presentation.

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Associate Director for  
Management and Operations

Attachment

\*References to CDC also apply to ATSDR.

REFERENCE POINT: Associate Director for Science, CDC

SUPERSEDED MATERIAL: CDC General Memorandum No. 77-10, Policy on the Use of Individuals' Initials in Published Materials

DISTRIBUTION: Mailing List No. 1, Code 2

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IN PUBLICATIONS OR PRESENTATION MATERIALS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) policy remains that names and initials of individuals are not to be included in the text of materials approved under the auspices of CDC. This applies to all documents cleared through CDC for publication or presentation in paper, electronic, or other media. This ruling includes--

- ! Documents of which CDC employees are senior authors.
- ! Documents of which CDC employees are coauthors with persons not affiliated with CDC.

In the latter case, it will be the responsibility of the CDC author(s) to inform the coauthor(s) of the CDC policy regarding this issue.

Authors may encounter the problem of citing previously published material in which private citizens are identified by names or initials. In this case, it is recommended that authors use the following example as a guide in transposing "identifying particulars" into alphabetical or numerical designations. "The patient discussed on page 44 (Jones and Smith 1973), hereafter designated as Patient 1...."

Examples of exceptions to this ruling are provided below:

- (1) *Cases in which initials are used in a document to designate one of several authors who did a particular segment (e.g., a survey) of the research being discussed.*
- (2) *Names mentioned in an Acknowledgments section to indicate assistance with a document.*
- (3) *Names of colleagues who provided research material or information.*
- (4) *Names of authors of material cited either in the text of a document or in a References Cited section.*

The editorial staffs of CDC organizational components should not approve for publication or presentation any materials which contain names or initials of persons unless the context is similar to those described above.

General Administration Manual, Appendix PHS.hf.45-19-B, provides additional guidance. This PHS Appendix describes how to prevent the accidental or inadvertent disclosure of identifiable information ("statistical disclosure") which may occur in releasing findings in a statistical table within a document.