Examples of “Not Human Subjects”

See also the Research Policy Handbook, RPH 7.3.

The following scenarios would be determined not to involve human subjects:

- A Computer Sciences student planned to develop automated computer methods to summarize the contents of medical texts. In order to do this, he needed examples of real clinical texts from a variety of sources, including clinical and research databases from Pathology and Radiology. None of the texts would contain any individually identifiable information.
  ➔ No private individually identifiable information and not obtained through direct interaction or intervention with participants specifically for this study.

- A physician wished to understand patient reactions to out-of-pocket costs for medical care. A colleague obtained results of a telephone survey done two years ago at another institution under an approved IRB protocol. The colleague planned to remove all identifying information from the surveys and send them to the physician to analyze. Although the data were coded, there was an agreement between the physician and his colleague that sharing the key to the code was prohibited.
  ➔ No private individually identifiable information and not obtained through direct interaction or intervention with participants; although coded, the key to the code could not be shared.

- A researcher in Bioengineering planned to examine spine tissue to determine the mechanical properties that help protect the spine from inadvertent damage. All of the spine tissues would be obtained from postmortem de-identified specimens.
  ➔ Cadaver specimens: Not about living individuals.

- A physician planned to evaluate the aluminum content of nutritional solutions given to low birth weight infants. He planned to ask the pharmacy to notify him when a solution was prepared for infants under a certain weight. A small amount of the solution would be sent to a lab for examination to ascertain if the solution was within the daily recommended intake.
  ➔ Not about living individual.

- Review of publicly available transcripts of public hearings about asthma and health issues.
  ➔ No private individually identifiable information and not obtained through direct interaction or intervention with participants.