What are research data?

Short Answer

Research Data comprise all data that are either used, or produced in research processes.

Detailed Answer

In order to understand the term *research data* a general definition of the term *data* is necessary: Data are a set of measured values of qualitative or quantitative variables regardless whether they are recorded on paper or in digital format.
Although metadata are data about data, and the related (data transformation) processes, they should be considered as essential as the primary data of a study, because *metadata could be the primary data of someone else's research* (e.g. in a meta analysis).

Research data are crucial for many processes successive to scientific discovery:

- reproducibility of research,
- foundation for further research,
- innovation,
- decision-making,
- many other aspects of society.

Thus, society builds upon solid, and comprehensive knowledge from science, and the research data provide evidence for our findings.