

Intended for healthcare professionals

Editorials

Making raw data more widely available

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New initiative by the Wellcome Trust sets out some guiding principles

Medical investigators routinely refuse to share data from medical studies, seeming to regard such data as private property rather than a public resource for the benefit of medical science and future generations of patients. One survey found that 75% of pharmaceutical researchers were opposed in principle to making raw data available.¹ Two studies have found that only a minority of researchers (10% and 25%) share data when publishing in journals with explicit policies that raw data must be made available.^{2 3} Even in genomics research, where the principle that microarray data should be deposited in a publicly accessible database is widely accepted, many published studies do not have an associated data set publicly available.^{4 5}

The benefits of sharing raw data from medical studies have been widely discussed.^{6 7 8 9} Data sharing ensures reproducibility, allows testing of secondary hypotheses, facilitates development of new statistical methods, provides ...

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