

Editorial



Overview of newly announced clinical data sharing policy from the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors

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In 2016, the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE) publicly proposed that medical journals have an ethical obligation to share clinical trial data. While this was accepted with mixed responses, the frequency of data sharing has been gradually increasing in different settings. Recently, ICMJE has made another announcement to member journals that all manuscripts that contain results from interventional clinical trials will be required to include a data sharing statement effective July 1, 2018. In addition, clinical trials that accept participants on or after January 1, 2019 will need to report a data sharing plan in the trial's registration. The committee's rationale behind this action was to enhance the quality of planning and conducting clinical trials.

Considering the risk that participants take for being involved in the trials, it is ethically important to create an environment where all researchers feel responsible for sharing clinical data from each individual participant with proper deidentification. We fully support the decision that ICMJE made regarding this matter and would like to provide our readers with more detailed insights on what will be expected from authors.

According to the newly announced conditions for data sharing statements, the following items must be included: whether deidentified data of participants will be shared and supplemental documents will be made available (e.g., study protocol, statistical analysis plan, etc.), exactly what kinds of data will be disclosed, when and for how long the data will remain accessible and by what access criteria (including with whom, for what types of analyses, and by what mechanism). *The Lancet* recently exemplified data sharing plans that would meet these requirements ([https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)31282-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)31282-5)).

It is quite encouraging that there are already some individuals that have been participating in sharing of clinical data with their colleagues. Yet, just to further promote this significant transition, it will also be mandatory for the authors of our journal that they prepare all their manuscripts in strict observation of research and publication ethics guidelines recommended by ICMJE. By abiding by the new rules, we hope to see sharing deidentified data become a norm in the global research community that all scientists have built. Moreover, striving to reach this goal will maximize already enormous contributions of clinical trial participants to revealing the unknown in medicine. While committed to this goal, we should also not forget that it will only be possible when those directly involved in clinical trials including funders, ethics committees, journals, trialists, data analysts, participants are driven to achieve this vision.