

Peer Review

Review of: "Trust and Trade: Ethical Reflections on Patient Trust and the Monetisation of Real-World Data"

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The manuscript's major strength lies in its comprehensive synthesis of regulatory, ethical, and governance perspectives, supported by contemporary case studies such as the DeepMind–Royal Free example and NHS data platform debates. The discussion is logically developed and clearly articulates the existing gap between methodological evidence integrity and relational ethical accountability. The emphasis on patient-centred legitimacy and benefit-sharing adds significant conceptual depth and aligns with emerging global discussions in data ethics and public health governance.

However, several aspects could further strengthen the manuscript. First, while the commentary effectively integrates ethical and policy frameworks, it remains largely normative and would benefit from incorporating additional quantitative empirical evidence, such as large-scale international patient perception studies or comparative cross-national trust metrics. Second, the manuscript occasionally reiterates key concepts, particularly regarding relational ethics and transparency safeguards, which could be streamlined to improve clarity and reduce redundancy. Third, although the proposed safeguards are well justified conceptually, their practical implementation challenges could be expanded with more concrete examples of operational models or pilot programmes demonstrating feasibility across different healthcare systems. Additionally, the manuscript could benefit from clearer differentiation between theoretical ethical recommendations and realistic regulatory adoption pathways to enhance policy applicability.

Overall, this is a well-written, intellectually rigorous, and policy-relevant commentary that makes a meaningful contribution to the ethical discourse surrounding real-world evidence governance. With minor refinement to reduce repetition and strengthen empirical support, the article has strong scholarly and practical value and is suitable for publication.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.