

# Academic health centers should take lead in promoting the sharing of biomedical research data

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Academic health centers (AHCs) have a critical role in enabling, encouraging, and rewarding the sharing of biomedical research data, say a team of academics in this week's *PLoS Medicine*. "The leaders of medical schools and academic-affiliated hospitals," they say "can play a unique role in supporting this transformation of the research enterprise."

Rebecca Crowley (University of Pittsburgh Medical School, USA) and colleagues argue that despite the anticipated benefits of data sharing, such sharing has "yet to be widely adopted in biomedicine" and they urge AHCs to take a leadership role. "Through their interwoven roles in education, research, and policy, AHCs can lead the development of best practices for establishing a data sharing culture."

The authors lay out 7 recommendations for AHCs to encourage data sharing:

- Commit to sharing research data as openly as possible, given privacy constraints, and streamline policies and procedures relating to institutional review boards (research ethics committees), technology transfer, and information technology
- Recognize data sharing contributions in staff hiring and promotion decisions
- Educate trainees and current investigators on responsible data sharing
- Encourage data sharing practices as part of publication policies

- Encourage data sharing plans as part of funding policies
- Fund the costs of data sharing, support for data repositories, adoption of sharing infrastructure and metrics, and research into best practices through federal grants and AHC funds
- Publish experiences in data sharing to facilitate the exchange of best practices.

"Academic health centers will benefit by leading the transition towards a culture of biomedical data sharing," conclude the authors. "More widespread awareness of these benefits can motivate key stakeholders to take concrete steps to enable, inspire, and reward data sharing within and beyond their institutions."

Source: Public Library of Science

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