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Whose Data is Your Data

Do you have ownership rights to your medical record?

Researchers say no. They are analyzing data from routine checkups. They are mining electronic health records of young patients with arthritis. They say the data is anonymous, but that doesn’t give them the right to use it without consent. The federal government is pushing data-mining to rationalize standardized medical decisions. In other words, your data could be used to ration your care.

One researcher is looking at records from retail medical clinics. He says data-mining gives him “data over time on millions and millions of patients.” Who told him he could do this? Congress did, in the HIPAA no-privacy rule. It’s time to repeal HIPAA.