

Publication

A review of the barriers to sharing in biobanking

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Although biobanks are gaining importance as tools in the field of biomedical research, enabling investigators to access large numbers of catalogued samples and/or data, most have not reached their full potential. Numerous obstacles may prohibit the efficient sharing of, and access to their sample and data collections. In order to minimize or overcome these obstacles while meeting ethical criteria, the first step is to identify the challenges to sharing between biobanks and between biobanks and researchers, thus enabling targeted solutions to be implemented. To date, no one has specifically catalogued the full scope of the barriers to sample sharing currently identified in the literature, yet such a list is essential if these matters are to be addressed. We have reviewed the literature on biobanks in order to identify the issues mentioned as barriers to sample sharing with or without data. Our literature search identified 15 barriers, including logistical, ethical, and legal issues. In this article, we provide a description of these barriers, discuss key themes, and conclude that empirical research is required to determine the full extent of the challenges addressed in the literature.

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