

Sir,

Some of the most important medical discoveries of our time, such as establishing the link between smoking and cancer, would not have been possible without the use of personal data. These discoveries have saved countless lives and continue to grow our understanding of how to treat and prevent disease.

There is a very real risk that the EU Data Protection Regulation currently being negotiated in Brussels will make crucial research unworkable. Disproportionate limits on the use of personal data in health research have been proposed that would immediately threaten studies across Europe involving millions of participants. It's critical that these restrictions are not included in the final version of the law.

Protecting people's privacy is vital. Strong safeguards and governance structures already exist to help ensure that personal information is used safely, ethically and securely in research. The proposed regulation must work with this system, rather than creating additional bureaucracy that will compromise important research.

We urge the European institutions to work together to ensure that the Regulation strikes an appropriate balance that protects the interests of individuals while enabling research that benefits us all.

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Professor Iain Cameron	Chair of the Medical Schools Council
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