

Review of: "Responsible Governance of Genomics Data and Biospecimens in the Context of Broad Consent: Experiences of a Pioneering Access Committee in Africa"

Asrat Mekuria

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

This manuscript illustrates, in plain language, the experiences of the genomic data access committee at the H3Africa initiative. The manuscript is indeed a good showcase of the lived experiences of an African institution. The manuscript is well written with little language hitch. Of course, the depicted experience is somewhat limited in scope in that only the experience of H3Africa is covered. Nonetheless, even within this context, the availability of such data from H3Africa will be useful - given that there are not many research groups in the domain of genomics research.

The issue of data sharing concerning genomics and specimens is presently under discussion in many African countries. There is probably a need for general guidance to which many research groups can subscribe and which can define specific ethics guidelines. It seems that many countries are still interrogating the ethical and socio-economic dimensions of the genomic data sharing guidelines.

The authors have given conclusions but did not make recommendations or attempt to set an agenda for future deliberations on genomic data sharing in the African context. This is important to drive the momentum as the subject will continue to be debated upon. It will be good to see a framed outline of questions (agenda) to be researched upon.

Some issues that could be explored further include: i) the need to talk to other researchers about how "broad consent" may be perceived, and ii) how study participants can be assisted to reflect on genomic data sharing and if they would re-evaluate the "broad consent" approach cf. to other options. Other issues that can comprise future deliberations can include: equity and the role of African scientists in leadership and agenda setting. The strategy that H3Africa has followed in putting a policy concerning genomic data sharing in different country contexts will surely give a living experience of challenges faced.

Thank you